BUSINESS / B1
Moody's raises outlook on RP banks

WORLD / A22
Iraq hangs Saddam's cousin 'Chemical Ali'

METRO / A19
NBI files raps vs Ivler, ma; US also wants slay suspect for drugs

ACROSS / A8
Troops clash with Ampatuan militiamen

Haiti's Filipino nuncio counters critics on slow aid

By Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

"GETTING BETTER EVERY DAY"

This was how Filipino Archbishop Bernardito Auza, Apostolic Nuncio to Haiti, described the progress of relief efforts in earthquake-ravaged Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital city.

He had some words for his critics who said relief efforts had been slow, chaotic and hampered by rivalries. "They have forgotten the tragedies when four hurricanes hit Haiti in 2008. Gathering relief efforts on a grand scale in a country with-

HAITI'S A15

Nene apologizes; Mar gets ice cream, cake

By Philip C. Tubeza and Gil Cabacungan Jr.

SEN. MAR ROXAS' remark that it was a pity some men turn vulgar when they grow old may have worked.

Yesterday, Senate

NENE/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, January 27, 2010 ★★ 8 sections / Vol. 23 / No. 93 P18

Enrile claims Villar tried to buy him off

NP bet denies offering a bribe

By Christine O. Avendaño

HE SAID, HE SAID.

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile yesterday accused Sen. Manuel Villar of attempting to bribe him during the height of the investigation into allegations against the latter in connection with the C-5 road extension project controversy.

Enrile said Villar, standard-bearer of the Nacionalista Party, tried to buy him off "in exchange for a favorable decision."

The Senate President said Villar offered the bribe at a luncheon meeting in a Makati hotel four months ago when the Senate committee of the whole was looking into allegations he was behind the double funding of the C-5 road project and its extension to benefit his real estate business.

Asked why he was disclosing the incident only now, Enrile said he wanted to show Villar's effort "to suppress the case."

"I did not want to reveal it then because I do not want to damage his case," Enrile said.

Villar denied Enrile's accusation, saying he had neither sought Enrile's help on the Senate inquiry nor offered him a bribe.

"I was confident that the documents, the records, the witnesses and the rules will prove that the C-5 road project was not double-funded, overpriced or tortured," Villar said in a statement, explaining why he could not have offered a bribe to Enrile.

ENRILE/ A4

SHOOT ME NOW Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago takes on Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile after he allegedly "insulted" her in connection with the procedures in tackling the committee report on the C-5 road project. If her freedom to express her views would be taken away, "then you might as well shoot me now," Santiago says in her privilege speech. Then she walks out. JEE TUAZON

Senators cool off but not Miriam; she walks

By Christine O. Avendaño and Philip C. Tubeza

SMARTING FROM THE FREE-FOR-ALL ON Monday, the Senate adjourned less than two hours after it convened yesterday to keep tensions from again boiling over.

But while conceding that the heated debate the other day "did not constitute the brightest moment" of the chamber, Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago took on Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile for the "insult" that he aired as a result of her comment on procedures in tackling Committee Report No. 780 on the C-5 road project.

And to dramatize her expressed outrage, Santiago said she was refusing interpellation and walked out after delivering a cosponsorship speech of the minority's Senate Resolution No. 1472, which seeks to

SENATORS/ A6

Chip in for more GMA legacy ads, other gov't agencies urged

By TJ Burgonio

ALL TOGETHER NOW! PLEASE.

The head of the Philippine Information Agency (PIA) yesterday exhorted other government offices to "bear part of the burden" of running advertisements highlighting President Macapagal-Arroyo's legacy.

Secretary Gerardo "Dodi" Limcaoco said the job of informing the public about the administration's completed programs for the last nine years lay not only with the PIA but with the entire bureaucracy.

"Even as we speak, we're asking other government agencies to bear part of the burden by allocating a small portion of their own budgets to help communicate what we're doing to the public," he said in a briefing.

Limcaoco maintained it was never too late for Ms Arroyo to advertise her legacy in the remaining

CHIP/ A15

SEEING RED President Macapagal-Arroyo, who is suffering from allergic conjunctivitis, attends the Nedz and Cabinet meetings at the Aguinaldo State Dining Room in Malacañang on Tuesday. (STAR/ALEXIS CORPUZ)

Comelec: Machines have 16-hr batteries

By Kristine L. Alave
with Wendell Yolanda Sonsio and Gabriel Cardinoza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

THE POWER OUTAGES IN Metro Manila and Luzon will not affect the conduct of the automated elections on May 10, the Commission on Elections said yesterday.

Comelec Chair Jose Melo assured the public that the Precinct Count Optical Scan (PCOS) machines, the equipment that will be used to cast and count the votes, were capable of running even without an external power supply. A PCOS machine has its own battery.

Melo also noted that the machines were not expected to work until evening. "At 6 p.m. its [voting, counting and canvassing are] completed and shortly after that [the results] transmitted," he said.

The Comelec chair said there was no need to have another plan in case of blackouts since the voting, canvassing and counting would not last more

COMELEC/ A11

Leftist allies stand by Villar; gutter language turns them off

THE MILITANT PARTYLIST representatives working seats in the Senate under the Nacionalista Party are standing by its standard-bearer, Sen. Manuel Villar, despite his refusal to face his colleagues and explain the C-5 road project.

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo also said the "gutter language" exchanged by the senators on Monday made him come to grips with Villar's reluctance to attend the Senate hearing.

In a statement, Ocampo said that despite the controversy, he and Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza would stick with Villar.

"Our alliance with Senator Villar and [his running mate] Sen. [Loren] Legarda remains

LEFTIST/ A4

JUST A HOLE IN THE GROUND It used to be a wave pool. Questions about the property's ownership may have turned off buyers from joining Tuesday's auction. (STAR/ALEXIS CORPUZ)

No takers for ₱143-M 'Boracay' mansion

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

IT SEEMED NO ONE REALLY wanted to have anything to do with a once sumptuous, P142.9-million mansion linked to a disgraced presidency.

No bidders came forward yesterday when the Sandiganbayan placed the "Boracay Mansion" on public auction—the second time in five years that the authorities tried to sell it off and the second time potential buyers shunned it. (See It's the Know on Page A6.)

The antigraft court has declared the property—dogged with questions about ownership and now dilapidated and

NO TAKERS/ A6

PRIME PROPERTY, SUBPRIME CONDITION The Boracay Mansion got its name from the fine white sand supposedly flown in from the world-famous resort island. The property at No. 100 11th Street in New Manila is now rundown.

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY: Mostly cloudy with isolated rains

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains

6/42 SUPERLOTTO

1st	0	0	2nd	0	0
3rd	0	0	4th	0	0

SUPER 6/55

1st	0	0	2nd	0	0
3rd	0	0	4th	0	0

P00,000,000.00

SIX DIGIT

0 0 0 0 0 0

4-D LUCKY PICK 4D

00 00 00 00

P00,000,000.00

SUPERLOTTO 6/49

00 00 00 00 00 00

P00,000,000.00

Massacre witness not missing

By Marlon Ramos

THE "MISSING" MAGUINDANAO POLICEMAN BEING eyed as a witness in the Maguindanao massacre has been in the custody of the Department of Justice (DOJ) all along, a police official disclosed yesterday.

Senior Supt. Benito Ildefonso, criminal investigation and detection Group (CIDG) operations chief, told Supt. Rex Adel Bongcay had personally been at the DOJ office in Manila on the day he was reported missing on Jan. 22.

Ildefonso said Dicongco's father, who is also a policeman, told Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) police that his son had been at the DOJ since Jan. 15.

Ildefonso said the younger Dicongco had gone to the DOJ to submit documents related to his application to join the Witness Protection Program.

Seeking protection

"Dicongco is seeking protective custody under the SEC.375 Witness Protection Program," Ildefonso told reporters at Camp Crame.

He denied reports Dicongco was under CIDG custody at Camp Crame in Quezon City when he supposedly left his quarters without informing his custodians.

He said the CIDG had turned Dicongco over to the ARMM police last month. Dicongco was the chief of the Maguindanao police provincial mobile group manning a checkpoint near the site of the Maguindanao massacre on Nov. 23 last year.

Fifty-seven people, including 30 journalists, were murdered allegedly by over 100 military and police personnel taking orders from Maguindanao Gov. Andal Ampatuan Jr. of Datu Unsay town.

"Dicongco was under the preventive custody of the ARMM police," said Ildefonso, who added that while the policeman was in Crame, an ARMM police lieutenant was assigned to guard him.

Senior Supt. Hermogenes Laraq, ARMM police director, had listed Dicongco as being Awol (absent without leave) after he allegedly slipped away from his guard.

Not in custody

But Ildefonso said Dicongco and 23 other police personnel who were brought to Camp Crame for their alleged complicity in the massacre were not in the custody of the CIDG.

Except for Dicongco, the other policemen were flown back to Maguindanao two weeks after the massacre, he said.

He said Dicongco was one of 56 policemen indicted in the carnage.

Philippine National Police Dir. Gen. Jesus Versoza, meanwhile, has created Special Investigation Task Group Maguindanao to handle the massacre case after police officials gave conflicting reports on Dicongco's status.

Chief Supt. Leonardo Espina, PNP spokesperson, said Versoza named Ildefonso team leader while Supt. Josefino Alba was designated as spokesperson.

LIBERAL PARTY candidates Noynoy Aquino and Mar Roxas are joined by party members in the LP anniversary gathering.

Noynoy leads LP vow 'never to steal'

By Gil Cabacungan

LEADING PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III yesterday presided over the country's oldest political party's bid to return to power and reassurance by leading its members in an oath "to never, never steal."

Aquino and hundreds of Liberal Party members signed a manifesto of hope anchored on anti-corruption campaign efforts to draw the line with opposing parties, during the LP's 64th anniversary celebration at Club Filipino in San Juan City.

A more confident and gib-laden-enjoyed lambasting not only President Macapagal-Arroyo but his closest rival, Sen. Manuel Villar, standard-bearer of the Nacionalista Party.

"I had a friend who told me he wasn't happy in his campaign. I told him I'm not happy in my campaign. I'm not happy in my campaign because I'm not stealing. I'm not happy in my campaign because I'm not buying votes. I'm not happy in my campaign because I'm not using the power of government to campaign for myself. I'm not happy in my campaign because I'm not using the power of government to campaign for my candidates

RP may import more rice due to El Niño

OF THE PHILIPPINES, the world's biggest rice buyer, may import more of the grain if an expected moderate dry spell hits its harvest, a senior government official said yesterday.

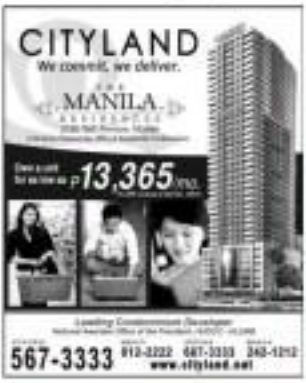
Agriculture Undersecretary Bernardo Rondevilla told a media briefing local weather forecasters were expecting a moderate El Niño would hit the dry cropping season, affecting nearly 344,000 hectares planned to dry.

Asked whether the government would import more rice due to El Niño, he said: "If we have to, we will." He did not give details.

Rondevilla said a mild El Niño episode may strain farm sector losses of nearly P3.8 billion.

"If the effect is severe, and that is unlikely, then the loss as will be greater." The country's rice purchases so far for 2010 are seen exceeding 2.6 million tons, a record high, after the govern- ment bought nearly 2.3 million from four traders last year and said it would allow private firms to bring in 350,000 tons.

The country already imports for this year after losing 1.3 million tons of paddy rice from strong typhoons that ravaged crops in September and October. Farmers



Enrile claims Villar tried to buy him off

From page A1

Enrile made his latest allegation against Villar instantly at a radio interview. He later issued a statement detailing the incident and spoke to reporters about it in the hallway.

The Senate President, who prepared the coronavirus report against Villar, has accused the senator of being behind moves to oust him to stop the chamber from tackling the report.

But the chamber started to tackle the other the Committee Report No. 780, which seeks to remove Villar for allegedly not declaring his conflict of interest and for using his position to increase the value of his properties through the C-5 road project in Las Piñas and Parañaque.

The government supposedly paid huge amounts to Villar's real estate firms for the right of way on his properties.

The committee report recommended the issuance of Villar and the owners of P62.2 billion for the cost of the project and the amount that Villar's companies purportedly gained from the project.

Villar sought meeting

In an interview and in his prepared statement, Enrile said that it was Villar who had sought the luncheon meeting on Aug. 29 last year in a restaurant in the Makati Shangri-La hotel.

Enrile and Villar had met three times before the luncheon meeting.

During that meeting, he recalled that Villar was seeking his help "because he was concerned about the investigation" and that Villar had told him he did nothing wrong in the C-5 project.

Enrile said he advised Villar to participate in or send his lawyers to the hearing of the committee of the whole so the latter could air his side.

"Several times during the meeting, Senator Villar interjected: 'Manong, huko naman may mali sabing ako sa isyu. Mahokoncong naman ako kung may makapasa kaya Diliberal brother, maybe I can help you if you need something,'" Enrile said in the statement.

He said he "ignored" Villar's statements, which according to him, made him "uncomfortable."

Still, Enrile said he told Villar he wanted to help him and assured him that he would be fair to him.

But Enrile said Villar remained his silent, prompting him to tell the latter, "Frankly, if I help you, don't worry. Huling hirap you if don't expect anything in return."

Asked whether he construed Villar's coffee as a bribery, Enrile said: "The way the matter was addressed itself to me was that he was trying to buy me off."

Enrile said he could not write a committee report that was influenced by the latter's withdrawal of his position.

Offer repeated to chief of staff

The Senate President said that he made an excuse to leave the luncheon and that his chief of staff, lawyer Gigi Reyes, stayed behind. Still, Villar "continued to repeat the same thing" to Reyes, Enrile said.

Enrile said he did not tell members of the committee of the whole about the incident.

In his statement, Enrile mentioned Villar "about his propensity to use his billions to offer favors to people, including his colleagues to avoid facing the charges against him."

Do like Erap

"I want to tell Senator Villar, being an opulent in the highest position in the land: Excuse you have helped a lot of people because you came from a poor family," Enrile said.

"Now that you are rich, you are in a better position to help more of the needy among the people. But to use your money to bribe people just because you want to kill the investigation instead of facing the charges against you, like President Estrada did, is not correct. You can do even this nation," he said.

Enrile said people would see through any attempt to use money to win the presidency. "But everyone can be bought. Bribery will be your downfall," he said.

In a statement, Villar wondered why he would seek Enrile's help in the case against him.

"Why would I seek his help when I am not guilty and I did not do something bad? All the documents I submitted and all those who testified to the best are stunned to that," he said.

Hurt by false story

Looking back, Villar said he thought he was dealing with honorable men who would view things fairly and impartially. "I was wrong," he said, adding that he was "hurt" by Enrile's "false story."

Villar witnessed his claim that the investigations against him were "concocted at malice and was meant to embarrass me so I will not be a factor in those elections."

He said Enrile's attacks against him became ugly when his ratings in surveys improved.

"I'm running for president properly. That's why they're trying to trip me up. And I'll prove she doing that to me," Villar said.

THE DENIAL Sen. Manny Villar denies allegations that he attempted to bribe Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile at the height of the investigation into the C-5 road right-of-way project controversy. AP FILES

THE ACCUSER Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile listens to Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago's privilege speech on Tuesday. Enrile left the session hall in the middle of Santiago's speech, ostensibly for the toilet's room, fuming and glowering as he walked past her seat. AP

Nene apologizes; Mar gets ice cream, cake

From page A1

Minority Leader Agaliou "Nene" Pimentel Jr. asked for forgiveness for using "unparliamentary language" during heated Senate debates on Monday on a resolution seeking to censure Sen. Manuel Villar over alleged "chaotic insertions" in the controversial C-5 road budget.

Pimentel had said Senate would have his own "insertions" now that he was censured.

"To those who I might have hurt in this chamber by the use of intemperate language or unseemly expressions, I apologize and beg their forgiveness from You through Him, O Lord," Pimentel said as he led the chamber in its opening prayer.

To keep cool

He said that "in the heat...some of us tend to say words that are coarse and vulgar."

"Forgive us, then, O Lord, our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us ..."

Pimentel added: "Finally, my pray, Lord, first allow all of us to keep our cool so that we are not distracted by side issues."

'I will defend Karina'

Earlier, before the session began, a visibly miffed Roxas said that Pimentel owed his wife, broadcaster Korina Sanchez, an apology for their remarks.

"There has been no apology and I don't expect anything. I will defend my wife because her honor was trampled on and I will not allow that. But he does not need to apologize to me, he should apologize to her," Roxas said.

Roxas added: "Kung kailan po ayo in, nanuda sabe po ayo nagng basloe (It's a shame he became vulgar when he got old)."

Roxas is the Liberal Party vice presidential candidate. Villar is the Nacionalista Party standard-bearer.

Demand for apology

Member's debate took a combative turn when, commenting on Senate statement that he had made no insertions in the national budget, Pimentel remarked: "After your marriage, you will have your share (Imbs)."

Roxas burned at the remark and pleaded: "I demand that (he) be removed from the record! This is an affront to my wife."

In a separate exchange, also on Monday, with Sen. Aquilino Martinez, Pimentel had said: "At least, I am not an eloquent dolt."

Senate is the Liberal Party vice presidential candidate's. Villar is the Nacionalista Party standard-bearer.

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Senate denounced

Akbayan Rep. Risa Hontiveros, a Liberal party senatorial candidate, said Pimentel's joke denounced the Senate proceedings and did not help his ally Villar at all.

"I am asking Senator Pimentel to apologize over his insertion joke. It was absolutely unedited for, irrelevant, and it should not have been said at all, especially by a senator who has a well-respected reputation as a freedom fighter," Hontiveros said.

"They can defend Senator Villar for all they want as it best being said versus in without losing civility," Hontiveros said.

No quarrel with Korina

Pimentel told reporters he had no intention of insulting Korina Sanchez when he made the quip about insertions.

"Certainly, that was not my intention ... I have no quarrel with Korina. I have respect for her as a very able host of a popular TV show and a lady. I have nothing against her," Pimentel said.

"Sir, I cannot apologize for something that I did not intend. Well, maybe if I was misunderstood and then maybe I should apologize, but only upon that," he said.

"But let me just make it clear, I have no quarrel with her. Why should I have a fight (with Korina)," he added.

Ice cream for Mar

Pimentel said his words should not be taken as an attack on women.

"My wife is a woman and my grandmother was a woman, I have four girls in my family so it's impossible that it was a slur against women," he added.

Roxas said Sanchez gave him a scoop of ice cream and a cake after he stood up for her on the Senate floor.

Roxas said Sanchez called him for "hero." **With a report from Leila B. Salaverria**

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STORY TELLERS

PERSPECTIVE 1 (8:00 AM)
Governance & Leadership

Sonia Lorenzo
Mayor, Iloilo City, Western Visayas

Pipoy Hugo
Project Director and Secretary
Save Labo Lanao Movement
Lanao del Sur

Atty. Rene Bañez
Head, Administration &
Alternative Management
PLDT & SMART

Dr. Eduardo Morato
Chairman, Ateneo Center for
Entrepreneurship

Valerie Paz
Vice Mayor, Leaders for Health
Bicol, Legazpi Diocese

PERSPECTIVE 2 (1:00 PM)
Mobilizing Communities

Ateneo Graduate School of Business Student Council

Dr. Jessica Soliven
President, Volunteer Org.
Executive Committee

Ramon Jose Arriola
Leader, Pro-Health
Services Cluster, San Jose del Monte

Lydia Ennis
President, CDR Institute

Atty. Marlon Manuel
National Coordinator
Alternative Law Groups

Atty. Carlos Medina, Jr.
Executive Director,
Human Human Rights Center

PERSPECTIVE 3 (3:40 PM)
Entering into Each Other's Worlds

Feliciano Torres
Vice President, Employees' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) and
Chairman, PCEP Institute for Productivity & Competitiveness

Therese Fernandez
President, Pro-Health, Inc.

Gloria Gingco
Owner-Driver
Pantranco Drivers Assoc.
Kalinga-Apayao Group

Atty. Jose Tale
Chairman, Citizens for Christ

Dr. Eugenio Ramos
Vice President, Medical Services Group, The Medical City

Dr. Pinchell Valentino
Leaders for Health, Diocese Dinagat Province

Dr. Allan Evangelista
Leaders for Health, Caraballo district

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, January 27, 2010
3rd Week in Ordinary Time
Angela Merici

1st Reading: 2 Sm 7:4-17
Gospel: Mk 4:1-20

Again Jesus began to teach by the lake, but such a large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it on the lake while the crowd stood on the shore. He taught them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said: 'Listen! The sower went out to sow. As he sowed, some of the seed fell along a path and the birds came and ate it up. Some of the seed fell on rocky ground where it had little soil. It sprang up immediately because it had no depth, but when the sun rose it was scorched, it withered because it had no roots. Other seed fell among thorn bushes and the thorns grew and choked it, so it didn't produce any grain. But some seed fell on good soil, grew and increased and yielded grain: some produced thirty, some sixty and some a hundred.' And Jesus added, 'Listen then, if you have ears.'

When the crowd were using, some who were around him with the Twelve asked about the parables.

He answered them, 'The mystery of the Kingdom of God has been given to you. But for those outside, everything comes in parables, so that, as the more they see, they don't understand, the more they hear, they don't understand, otherwise they would be converted and pardoned.'

Jesus said to them, 'Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any of the parables?

'What the sower is sowing is the word. Those along the path where the seed fell are people who hear the word, but as soon as they do, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.

Other people resemble the seed like rocky ground. As soon as they hear the word, they accept it ordinarily, but they have no roots in it but only a little while. So sooner does trouble or persecution come because of the word, they they fall.

Others receive the seed as among thorns. After they hear the word, they are caught up by the anxieties of this life, false hopes of riches and other desires. All these come in and choke the word so that finally it produces nothing.

'And these are others who receive the word on good soil. They hear the word, take it to heart and produce, some thirty, some sixty and some one hundred times as much.'

Commentary

"The sower went out to sow his seed..." It's not enough simply to hear the Word of God. We need to go on receiving it and nurturing it within us, so that it can eventually come to bear fruit, whatever the processes entail.

Corrections

IN THE JAN. 23 ISSUE, Jesús L. Hernández's "Newspeak" column on Page A12 of the Opinion section—"Memory of the heart"—misspelled the surname of a Filipino artist. His name is Lule "Sonjoy" Yee Jr.—not Lule "Sonyo" Lee Jr.

* * *

IN THE JAN. 23 ISSUE, a front-page story—"Maribeth Bribes is informant, gunman?"—misstated the date of suspected road rage gunman Jason Ivler's arrest. Ivler was arrested on Jan. 16—not Jan. 11.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, an Across the Nation story on Page A14—"Ms your old sadistic sensations Mendiola"—misstated the date of the Mendiola massacre. The massacre happened on Jan. 22, 1987—not June 22, 1987.

* * *

IN THE JAN. 24 ISSUE, Patricia Evangelista's "Medical to Madness" column on Page A9 of the Opinion section—"The insidious"—misspelled the surname of a state prosecutor. His name is Jose Pedro Sayoro—not Layoro.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a caption on Page B-1 of Sunday Biz misspelled the surname of the former chair and chief executive officer of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. His name is Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco...not Cojuanco.

* * *

ANOTHER CAPTION on the same page misspelled the name of Cojuangco's roommate. His name is Lulu Dad's—not Lulu Dads.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, an Automotive story on Page F2—"Survey: More Pinoys going to cinemas"—misstated the increase in the proportion of viewers who watched Filipino films in movie theaters from 2006 to 2009. In July 2009, 13 percent of respondents watched Filipino movies in theaters, up from 7 percent in 2006, or an increase of 57 percent...not 8 percent.

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Villar allies: Bribe try not in Enrile report

By Philip C. Tubeza and Gil Cabacungan Jr.

TWO SENATE ALLIES OF SENATOR Manuel Villar yesterday warned Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile for accusing Villar of trying to bribe him in exchange for a favorable decision on the chamber's investigation of the controversy surrounding the C-5 road extension project.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said Enrile should have included his "insinuation" in the Senate report on the C-5 project issued in his opening speech of the report if he really believed that there was a bribery attempt.

"I find Enrile's allegation a little inconsistent for the reason that in order to fill out his report, you know, under people we believe that a certain person is corrupt without offering any proof to begin with," Pimentel said.

"The insinuation was that there was an attempt which I think was not attempted," Senator Ramon Revilla Jr. said. "But what he did in his explanation yesterday when he sponsored the committee report," he added.

Pimentel noted that there was "no mention of that in the committee investigations, no mention of it either in the committee report," which Enrile sponsored on Tuesday.

Another charge

Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago said Enrile's claim of an attempted bribery was "another charge" that should be referred to the Senate ethics committee.

"Then the Senate would have to decide if it was going to constitute itself into a committee of the whole to investigate the Senate President's accusation," she said.

"But we have no time for that kind of investigation ... the committee is functus officio (it has completed its duty) as of today," Santiago said.

Revilla said only have an adverse publicity effect on Senator Villar and, in effect, it places him in an unfair position because he's in no position to defend himself because he'll be busy with the campaign," she said.

"If he's bothered with this case and all others are free with their time and with their energy then, in effect, it is an unfair imposition on a president-bid republican," Santiago added.

Senators Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, Mar Roxas and the rest of the senatorial candidates cause the rest of the presidential candidates in this election season not to cut him down to size."

And, with the purported attempt to oust Enrile from the Senate's top post, she asked why he "should not consider (Villar) by facing the prospect with equanimity, and if necessary, leaving the position with grace."

For the reluctant that it was time to let the day to move for Enrile's replacement as Senate president.

So can we

Santiago ended her speech by saying that she was "very, very sorry" for Enrile.

"With all humility and all respect, I will walk out of the proceedings," she said before leaving the chamber.

Asked to comment on Santiago's remarks, Enrile said his views on how the Senate should vote on the committee report against Villar differed from hers.

"If she thinks that I insulted her—although that is not my purpose—she knows that there is a remedy. She can go to court and charge me with libel and I will meet her there," Enrile told reporters in a mix of English and Filipino.

Senators were one in saying that the heated debate on Monday did not speak well for the Senate.

"This should not happen again. It's embarrassing," said Sen. Joker Arroyo, who added that he had never seen such a rowdy session in his nine years in the chamber.

Arroyo also said all the senators were to blame for the controversy because they were the ones who approved the P389-million funding for the C-5 road project.

Sen. Francis Escudero said he was saddened by what had happened, and that he thought Villar should have his accusers because he owed it to the Senate and to the people.

'One of the bloodiest'

Zubiri said the Monday session was "one of the bloodiest in the history of the 14th Congress."

"It's only then that I saw so many fighting each other. Usually, we only have two," he said. "The language used was so much and bordered on being unparliamentary. And of course, emotions were running high."

Zubiri said tensions were again "building up" yesterday, which was why the Senate decided to suspend discussing Enrile's committee report.

"It was good no one stood up and challenged a colleague to a fist fight or a shooting match," he said.

Zubiri said he would talk to members of the majority and minority blocs to determine when the chamber would vote on the committee report.

He said no one from the majority had approached him to ask that they be allowed to interpellate Enrile.

"I have to ask the Senate President if he agrees that if no one will ask him more questions, we will hold a vote," Zubiri said.

With a report from Alyssa Gearbarino

Senators cool off but not Miriam; she walks out

From page A1

silver lies. Manuel Villar of wrongdoing to the road project.

Toward the end of her speech, Santiago paused and raised Enrile as he walked past her to leave the session hall. It seemed one that he was heading to the men's room.

Fifteen senators attended yesterday's session, with Villar conspicuously absent.

Heating up again

The majority bloc was to start interpellating Enrile on his committee report, which seeks to censure Villar for alleged anomalies and conflict of interest in the road project.

But the chamber immediately took up "other business matters"—the Immigration Act and the proposed amendments to the charters of the National Electrification Administration and the National Library—after Santiago's outburst.

"Things heated up again, because Miriam's speech was somewhat bloody and some colleagues felt offended to, so we suspended the session. Our colleagues were trying to keep their heads cool," said Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri.

"They said things might get worse if we brought [the issue] back to the floor. So we took up other business matters for the day," he said.

'Without provocation'

In her speech, Santiago said Enrile insulted her when he refused to let opposed view the other day then a vote of 14 senators was needed for the house to adopt the committee report against Villar.

Said Santiago: "In [Tuesday's] hearing I had this paragraph. You're cornered that 'there no called reports have not read the procedure in the country and in the UK.'

"Then, without any provocation, I have been insulted."

She said Enrile's remark against her constituted "unparliamentary behavior," and that she did not think that the senators would be able "to tolerate the issue to acceptable manner."

"... If this is the kind of hostile, belligerent attitude are being in the floor, then all of us should resign immediately, because we do not deserve to be senators," she said.

At one point, when she said that the minority was "operating under a democracy and not under martial law," Santiago appeared to be taking a swipe at Enrile, who was debate minister during the martial law years.

Santiago also said she had always been polite in expressing a legal opinion that could run counter to that of her fellow senators.

"But I certainly will not countenance any senator insulting me, just because my opinion happens to be different from his," she said.

Santiago said that if her freedom to express her views would be taken away from her, "then you might as well down me now."

She witnessed that the adoption of the Senate committee of the whole's recommendation to censure Villar and demand the return of P6.2 billion that his companies purportedly gained from the road project required the vote of two-thirds of the entire house.

'Poisonous' atmosphere

Earlier in the day, when asked to comment on Monday's proceedings, hearings and the atmosphere was "poisonous."

"I'm not just doing anything that the public should be proud of," she said. "I was expecting a high-level policy debate." Regarding Enrile's statement that he felt Villar had attempted to bribe him, she said: "The law is not a question of a feeling or a sentiment."

In her speech, Santiago said Senate rules only considered disorderly behavior or heinous behavior as the kinds of offenses that called for the suspension or expulsion of a senator.

"But what about behavior that is more than disorderly but less than heinous?" she said, adding that there was a "gray area" in the law and that senators had to "fill this gap in our rules."

Beyond reasonable doubt

She suggested that senators apply "proof beyond reasonable doubt" in investigating a senator's deemed offense.

"We should not suspend or expel a senator on mere credible substantial evidence. Because that would be tantamount to capital punishment," she said.

Santiago said the Senate had "forfeit (our) authority to our political affiliations."

She said Enrile took over from Villar as Senate president "because of the out of the presidential candidates in this chamber wanted to cut him down to size."

And, with the purported attempt to oust Enrile from the Senate's top post, she asked why he "should not consider (Villar) by facing the prospect with equanimity, and if necessary, leaving the position with grace."

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With a report from Alyssa Gearbarino

Palace steers clear of Senate battle zone

By TJ Burgonio

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY steered clear of the wrangling in the Senate but expressed hope that the public would see through the character of the senators running for president in the May elections.

Secretary Gonzalo Limosnero, the head of the Philippine Information Agency and officer in charge of the Office of the Press Secretary, said the senators should let the public be the ones among themselves the issue of subsidies to senator Sen. Manuel Villar over the C-5 road extension project.

In the same way, he said, the House of Representatives, which adjourned session on Monday for the start of campaigning, should be allowed to find a way to resolve its problem.

"We've already seen the bills that are priority," Limosnero said at a briefing. "[In fact] the question of questions and concerns, I think they should manage that themselves. Questions in the House and decorum in the Senate are some things that they should manage themselves, and we have nothing to say about that."

At the same briefing, Undersecretary Lorelei Fajardo, deputy spokesperson for President Macapagal-Arroyo, said the debate in the Senate should tell the public more about the senators, especially those seeking the presidency.

Senators Benigno Aquino III, Mar Roxas, Gilbert Teodoro, Manny Villar and Villar are all vying for the presidency.

Fajardo, Limosnero and Undersecretary Jesus Dureza will be among the Cabinet officials who will file their certificates of candidacy for the May elections on Friday.

Dureza will be the last Cabinet official to file his certificate of candidacy for the May elections.

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Leftist allies stand by Villar; gutter language turns them off

From page A1

strategy. It is based on a platform of change, good governance, foreign policy, human rights and peace. We continue to support them as they bid for the top posts of the land," he said.

"I was undermined Senator Villar's integrity as about the Senate proceedings. Considering that he's up against presidential candidates and a supporter of other presidential bets, the endorsement will be doubtful. Maybe there a weaken in staying away from such a proceeding."

Electoral lover

Ocampo said he was disappointed what was said at Monday, and that the heated hearing dashed hopes that it would produce an impartial result.

"It was disappointing that gutter language has debased the Senate proceedings as the C-5 issue, misdirecting a rather, dignified transaction from investigating," he said.

"If (Monday's) proceedings were any indication, it appears that the electoral lover has totally engulfed the Senate and any discussion on the C-5 controversy will be tainted."

The other day, Ocampo warned that the C-5 controversy would haunted Villar during the election campaign if the latter were to blame for the controversy because they were the ones who approved the P389-million funding for the C-5 road project.

Spokes to the LP standard bearer and Roxas to his running mate.

But he made the resolution in a radio interview hours before the LP 49th anniversary celebration.

BP's No. 1 man

"If this is true, this is a very serious charge of attempting to bribe no less than the No. 1 man in the country in order not to perform his task of exhuming corruption," Ocampo said in a statement.

Ocampo charged that Villar's camp "is desperate. I hope this is not true for the sake of Senator Villar," said former Senator President Franklin Drilon, an LP senatorial candidate.

Drilon said Enrile should not just drop standing a public revelation of his morning with Villar, "he should go beyond that and help have the enforcement of our laws on bribery."

Villar's former ally in the Senate, Senator Nikki Coseteng, former Sen. Ralph Recto, an LP senatorial candidate, advised Villar to address the issue separately.

"I think this issue will last even after the end of the campaign and this will not go away. It is better for my friend, Manny Villar, to answer immediately because it will not help if it will last longer," Recto.

No takers for ₱143-M 'Boracay' mansion due to ownership question

From page A1

abandoned—to be part of controversial plunderer former President Joseph Estrada's ill-got ten wealth.

It was said to come to the evidence of one of Estrada's mistresses, one time starlet Laarni Enriquez, with whom he has two children.

Estrada has once a president, set parole and is running again for president in the May elections but the former talk of the town mansion linked to him seems headed for oblivion.

Ureta's long wait

Some 30 callers, including real estate agents and people who introduced themselves as working for politicians, called up to present their interests to join the help-delayed auction.

Sandiganbayan's Chief Sheriff Edgardo Ureta waited four hours to start the auction—but nobody came to put in a bid.

Ureta offered one property, the massive Boracay beach didn't have the cash.

The auction was originally scheduled to start at 10 a.m. Two hours late, Ureta said some presumed bidders had called to say they were still trying to come up with enough cash.

Ureta had required that bidders bring cash to the auction—or at least get confirmations from banks on the availability of funds.

'Not liveable anymore'

Through a 2007 valuation report had put its value at P143.9 million. The property's said to be worth up to P200 million at current market prices, with neighboring lots commanding prices of between P80,000 and P450,000 per square meter, Ureta said.

The estimate just refers to the lot since the remaining structure is no longer what it once was. The valuation report described the mansion as now "totally damaged, vandalized and not anymore liveable."

Forfeiture order

The Sandiganbayan ordered the forfeiture of the property after it examined the former president of plunder in September 2007.

The auction was delayed several times, however, as the Quezon City government also claimed ownership after the property's registered owner, St. Peter's Holdings, failed to pay more than P1 million in real property taxes in 2004.

The property is covered by two land titles: One for 1,963 square meters and the other covering the 5,130 square meters the Quezon City government is declaring.

Boracay's letter

After no bidder showed up at 2:00 p.m. and since the registered owner ignored a one-year redemption period allowed by the authorities, the property was supposed to the city government under a new transfer certificate title, Quezon City Mayor Bolinao Belmonte Jr. said in a letter to the city government.

The lack of bidders more official time was no surprise.

Only a hole in the ground

Quezon City treasurer Victor Rodriguez told reporters the auction was "unsuccessful" because no one bidded. The bidders also called out the steel ranking of the lot.

The property's aircon was that been replaced by robbers. The pool became nothing more than a hole in the ground.

In November 2007, the Land Registration Authority ordered the Quezon City government to relinquish its claim to the property. The was to allow the Sandiganbayan to auction off the "Boracay Mansion" in favor of the national government.

On Dec. 4, 2006, the Sandiganbayan announced the auction for Jan. 26, however, as in 2006 no bidders came forward. *Compiled by Cito Beltran, Inquirer Research*

Source: Inquirer Archives

IN THE KNOW: Boracay Mansion

CONTROVERSY HAS HOUNDED THE "Boracay" property for years.

In March 2001, the National Bureau of Investigation established that the property in Boracle—which derived its name from its five white coral that was supposedly flown in from the world's deepest ocean—had been bought using funds from the so-called Jose Velarde account.

Jose Velarde is alleged to be an alias used by deposed President Joseph Estrada to amass ill-gotten wealth.

Valued at P143.9 million, the property in Sta. Rita, Tabon Island in New Manila, once boasted of a mansion and a water pool—cited of containing pool equipped with a machine that produces artificial waves.

Ownership question

The property was found to be registered under St. Peter's Holdings Corp., which bought it on Oct. 1, 1998.

The company was owned by businessman Jose Yap, who claimed that the real owner was Estrada's friend Jaime Dichaves. Estrada himself testified it was Dichaves' property and that he only borrowed it for a time.

The Sandiganbayan ordered out on an earlier bid for the property a September 2005 after its owners failed to pay an accumulated amount of P1.7 million in real property taxes.

First auction

Before the 2006 auction, St. Peter's Holdings was served seizure of possible forfeiture. Meanwhile, the Quezon City government found there was no longer accessory to that owner of the address given. 9th floor, Bonis 930 building, in Ortigas.

With the disappearance of the owners, the auction pushed through. There were no bidders and this resulted in the property's forfeiture to the city government.

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Across the NATION

Assistant Editor Tony Burgonia

Troops clash with Ampatuan militiamen

DAVAO CITY—AUTHORITIES CLASHED WITH gunmen believed to be members of a militia loyal to the Ampatuan clan in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao, in the wake of the continuing manhunt for private armies, police said yesterday.

Senior Supt. Bienvenido Latag, acting police chief in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, said a suspect, identified as Amir Odin Gonzaga, was killed in the 30-minute clash that took place in Barangay Inda.

Latag said there was no casualty on the government side.

Latag said soldiers and police assets searched a suspected safe house where they encountered the militiamen.

But the military has another version of the clash.

Maj. Randolph Cabangbang, spokesperson of the Eastern Mindanao Command, said soldiers from the 9th Scout Ranger Company were patrolling at 11 a.m. Sunday when they clashed with at least 20 Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels under a Ricardo Ayunan.

Cabangbang said Ayunan's identity was provided by residents of the area.

He said based on field reports, two of Ayunan's men were injured in the clash.

In Cotabato City, Gov. Herbert Sinsuat, spokesman chief of the military-led Joint Security Coordinating Center, said the MILF could avoid clashes with soldiers if its members did not carry firearms outside their camps.

Sinsuat said MILF forces should also stay in their barracks to avoid being mistaken for members of private armies.

He said while operations against private armed groups continue, the military "is trying to communicate with Datu Bukay [Ampatuan Jr.] through negotiations."

"We teach as possible, we want to prevent armed encounters so as not to displace innocent civilians and cause unnecessary casualties," he said.

Dozens of armed followers of the Ampatuan clan are reported to be hiding in various parts of the province. —Reports from Allan Nawal, Ed Gamaru and Charlie Señase, Inquirer Mindanao

NEWSBRIEFS

■ PANGASINAN

Still food basket

THIS PROVINCE has remained the food basket of the Ilocos despite the typhoons and massive flooding that decapitated the region in the last two years.

Gov. Amado Espino Jr. said although natural calamities reduced its production levels, Pangasinan maintained its position as the region's leading producer of rice (60 percent), corn (80 percent), fish (64 percent), mangoes (36 percent) and eggplants (53 percent). "The true situation that our agricultural extension program is working," the governor said on Monday. —Gabriel Cardenas, Inquirer Northern Luzon

PERFORMERS take to the streets of Pangalusian to celebrate good harvests in Villasis town because.

■ BATAAN

Battle of Legazpi

LEGAZPI CITY commemorated Saturday the 113th anniversary of the Battle of Legazpi and the historic role of its people during the Filipino-American War.

On Jan. 23, 1900, Filipino guerrillas fought American forces with bolos in front of the lines of Gen. Lawton's advance. They were led by Filipino general, Antero Roza, whose 800-man strong Filipino resistance forces confronted a superior invasion force of American soldiers supported by naval vessels.

Mayor Noel E. Rosal led the commemoration day. —Roy M. Raad, Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ LEYTE

More poor to get cash

AT LEAST 34,000 families in Eastern Visayas will benefit from the poverty alleviation program of the national government this year, officials said.

The families were picked from municipalities and cities covered by the expansion of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), according to Ludivina Coville, regional director of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Coville said more than P500 million has been allocated this year to expand the program to more provinces. A family with three children, with the eldest not being more than 14 years old, will receive P1,400 in cash per month under the program. Childless couples will receive P500 a month.

A WOMAN carrying a child lines up for aid during one of President Macapagal-Arroyo's cash-giving rallies.

—Joey Gabieta, Inquirer Visayas

Sinnott back to where he was seized

ZAMBOANGA CITY —Barely two months after he was freed by his kidnappers, Irish missionary Fr. Michael Sinnott returned to Pagadian City, where he was taken at gunpoint by a band of armed men.

Chief Supt. Angelo Vanglao, Western Mindanao police director, confirmed Sinnott's return to Pagadian City.

"He's there already and we are providing security to the priest," Vanglao said yesterday. He declined to provide further details on the priest's return.

The Columban Society announced news on the 80-year-old priest's return to Pagadian City, where he serves as program director of Hanapy Kalusugan Foundation Inc., a non-government child welfare organization.

When he was released after being kidnapped on Dec. 11, Sinnott said he wanted to return to his work as soon as possible.

"I've been there for years working, there's

FR. MICHAEL SINNOTT during a press conference after his release last year.

where my work is," Sinnott said in an earlier interview.

Asked if he was not afraid of being kidnapped anew, the Irish priest said in jest, "They will hardly kidnap me a second time because I am a bit old, and I find taking a bit difficult at times. I think they'd be glad to kidnap a younger man next time."

Sinnott also reportedly said he was not angry at his kidnappers, who he described as misled

"They will hardly kidnap me a second time because I am a bit old ... I think they'd be glad to kidnap a younger man next time...."

of Mindanao.

Authorities later filed charges against several persons linked to the Sinnott kidnapping.

Senior Supt. Ramon Dedicatorias, Zamboanga del Sur police chief, said police were making sure foreign missionaries were protected in the province.

"Even if they (missionaries) don't like security personnel talking them, we really have to provide for their safety," he said. —Julie Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

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Vivat Cor Iesu Mission Award	Samahang Bagong Buhay Foundation, Inc. *Building Homes for the Kingdom*
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Quezon farms finally get freezer, tram lines

MAHAYO, QUEZON—THE AMBING OF A modern freezer and the planned construction of mass lines for mountain farmers will boost vegetable production in the central part of Quezon province.

Recently, the Department of agriculture turned over a unit of a multifunction threshing machine to the "Samong Pamilihan ng Produktong Agrikultura ng Quezon" (SPPAQ), an agricultural buying station along the Maharlika Highway in the village of Sampaloc II.

The Filipino-invented machine, which uses the liquid-quick freeze (LQF) method, will now allow the vegetable trading post to accept surplus farm products for cold storage for a long period and still retains their quality and taste.

The government is acquiring 99 units of the cold machines to help fishermen and vegetable farmers, said Dennis Acosta, an assistant agriculture secretary who led the turnover.

Fernando Docena, inventor of the freezer machine using the new brine immersion freezing (BIF) technology, explained that unlike conventional ice-making machines, his innovation can retain agricultural products like fish, meat, leafy vegetables and fruits in sealed styrofoam foam boxes for two to three days without ice.

"If these commodities are placed inside standard refrigerators or freezers after being frozen to BIF freezers, these can last from six months to one year and still preserve the quality of these goods," added Docena.

It takes as little as three to 30 minutes (depending on type, size and volume of product to be processed) to freeze a product using BIF, compared to the conventional method, which takes three-four hours, the IM said in a statement.

The machine is capable of freezing a maximum of 500 kilograms of vegetables in one operation.

Quezon Rep. Proceso Alcala, initiator of the SPPAQ, said the machine will complement the cold storage facility of the vegetable trading post.

"The freezer machine will be of great help to the modernization of the trading post to make it more competitive for the benefits of our farmers," Alcala said.

Alcala, however, said vegetables should reach the market as soon as they are harvested.

"The cold storage facility is just a backup facility in case of harvest surplus or during emergency cases," he said. —*Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

"The cold storage facility is just a backup ... in case of harvest surplus ..."

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Where are Glory, Cory, Erap and Fidel?

By Anselmo Roque
Science City of Muñoz

WHERE HAVE GLORIA, ERAP, Fidel and Cory gone? These quality breed carabaos (water buffaloes), named after Philippine presidents, came out of test tubes and hailed as products of the country's best scientific minds to propagate and improve the native symbol of Filipino industry.

At the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC) genetic pool in the Science City of Muñoz in Nueva Ecija, Glory and Cory named after Presidents Macapagal-Arroyo and the late President Corazon Aquino, had already given birth to two high-quality calves early. They are prolific milk producers.

Erap, named after current President Joseph Estrada, is a high-quality bulling bull that the PCC uses in its breeding program. He was sent to the PCC National Bull Farm in Carmaglan town, where he joined other bulls in donating semen that is processed in a laboratory for the PCC's use.

Fidel, the carabao named after former President Fidel V. Ramos, is at the dairy farm of the PCC branch station at Central Luzon State University (CLSU) in Muñoz. He is with the herd of the dairy carabaos

TEST TUBE technology used by the Philippine Carabao Center in Nueva Ecija helps improve the breed of the country's carabaos. Glory (one of her test-tubing [remarked], one of the animals developed using the technology) joins other carabaos at the PCC's pens, part of the Science City of Muñoz.

string calves through natural mating.

The project from which the "presidential carabaos" have been produced is officially called "Propagation of Swamp Buffaloes through Embryo In Vitro Production with Carabao-Gnawin Technique."

Glory was born on April 5, 2005, the birth date she shared with Ms Arroyo. Glory was a cause for celebration for the PCC and scientific community as the technique was proven to be a success and that no physical deformities were found on her.

Animal experts say Glory is a top-of-the-line water buffalo that promises to produce at least seven times more milk than the average yield of a native dam.

Dr. Danilo Fulano Dorado, senior agricultural and genetic breeder of the PCC's technology commercialization, said Glory's embryo was assembled by a PCC team in India. This was flown to the Philippines in cryopreserved form and transferred to a surrogate mother buffalo in the agency's gene pool.

Dorado said Glory, Cory and Fidel were born in the PCC days apart of each other following Glory's birth.

A number of other calves have since been produced using this biotechnique, the latest of which was in December last year in Barangay Maguinggonay in Muñoz.

Dr. Liberado Cruz, PCC executive director, said the "test-tube calves" were given such names to honor Philippine presidents who helped push the carabao improvement program to the country.

The program, he said, is meant to propagate improved breed of Philippine water buffaloes for more draft power, meat, milk and hide and to create a robust carabao-based industry in the country.

Appearance

Glory's physical appearance differs from Cory and the rest of the more than 300 genetically superior water buffaloes being kept at the gene pool. One of her horns is curved downward and the other a little upward.

"Maybe, her mother has the gene of another breed of water buffalo," Dorado said. "But we saw nothing wrong about it as the mother was assisted to breed with a bull."

The semen of Erap and other bulls in Carmaglan is stored in liquid nitrogen tanks and sent to other parts of the country so farmers and farm owners can avail themselves of the technology of artificial insemination.

At the Carmaglan farm, semen is collected from each of the bulls two times in the morning, Tuesdays and Fridays.

Data record from the PCC showed that Erap produced 3,270 doses of semen from January to June 2009. Officials said Erap had sired thousands of calves in different parts of the country.

Other test-tube calves were given names in honor of local and foreign officials.

Bai was named after Mercedes Rayles, director of the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development; Liberty, in honor of PCC Executive Director Cruz; and Shaman, Irfan, Kamla and Shaharri, after Indian officials who supported the project.

Dorado said the PCC resorted to the test-tube technique to hasten the production of superior quality carabaos.

"It takes about 15 years or more to produce purebred carabaos. In the test-tube technique, all it takes is only one year to produce purebreds," Dorado said.

The technique involves getting tissues or oocytes (a cell from which an egg or ovum develops) from the ovary of the female carabao and fertilize them in the laboratory with the semen from quality bulls. After this process, the embryo is cryopreserved in a liquid nitrogen tank.

The embryo is later transferred to the selected surrogate mother carabaos.

Dorado said this technique was an improvement of the original procedure which produced the first test-tube calves, Mithkat and Maganda, in 1998. The fresh embryos then had to be transferred to a surrogate within a few hours.

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THE LIONNAIRES of the Cebu provincial jail dance to for-mation during the video recording of their latest hit on YouTube, Michael Jackson's "They Don't Care About Us." The video has had over 500,000 views already. The dance was supervised by the choreographer of the late King of Pop. The inmates rehearsed for two days.

NEW ON YOUTUBE

Jail dancers hit it big again

CEBU'S DANCING PRISONERS are hitting it big again with a new Internet video featuring a spectacular routine led by Michael Jackson's choreographer dancing in the Cebu lead of the pop king's posthumous DVD.

The clip has already generated almost a million hits on the video sharing website YouTube since it was uploaded on Friday by Sony Entertainment ahead of yesterday's global release of the late superstar's "This Is It" DVD.

The four-minute, 16-second film shows Jackson choreographer Travis Payne, together with dancers Daniel Cobles and Dave Reid, leading 1,200 inmates clad in regulation orange prison trousers and black shirts featuring the DVD's logo. They go through a well-synchronized jail yard routine to the music itself and Jackson's "They don't care about us."

Sony said Payne and his crew spent two days this month at the maximum security jail in Cebu to rehearse and record the dance as part of the promotion for the launch of Jackson's DVD.

The King of Pop died on June 25 last year.

First YouTube hit

The Cebu inmates, including murderers, rapists and drug traffickers, achieved instant Internet stardom the world when a clip of them dancing to Jackson's "Thriller" hit was posted on YouTube in 2007.

The "Thriller" clip has since generated 37.5 million hits, leading the prisoners' "exit man," Glenn Chen, an Ilot, the Cebu jail has been charging curiosity fees to tourists who come to watch the inmates' performances.

According to Rowe Garcia, the obviously proud Cebu jail warden, a local admirer of Sony Entertainment phoned him last December to tell him about the plan of the company to do a video of the dancing inmates.

He admitted he thought the news was too good to be true. He said it was only when he was informed that the production crews were arriving in Cebu on Jan. 16 that he believed he actually was. Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, about the project. She agreed to the filming of the video "free of charge."

"Agreeing to the project has its issues considering that we came it's priceless. I mean, no money can buy the prestige," Garcia said.

Rehearsals

However, he said, the inmates were given the black T-shirts they wore in the filming of the dance videos and were provided snacks throughout the dance rehearsals.

The inmates' dance program choreographer, Kwentcalbe, coordinated with Payne to make it easy for the inmates to follow the steps, Garcia said.

The inmates rehearsed the whole day of Jan. 19 and on the morning of Jan. 20. The filming of the dance video was done at 3 p.m. that Tuesday, Garcia added.

The deal was that the shooting would be exclusive to Sony Entertainment. Garcia said the production crew was very strict about this. Aside from the crew, Garcia said he was the only one allowed to take videos and no media coverage was allowed.

Garcia saw the clip as a plug for Cebu's leadership as well. "The song 'They Don't Care About Us' is about giving our rights that look at us, that local governments really cares for the inmates. The good performance of the inmates reflects the good governance of my career in the province," Garcia said, beaming.

The governor had her own message. The inmates "have given the province of Cebu so much pride and have actually put the province at the center of world's attention. And so I am so thankful for the transformation of our inmates from what they were when I first became governor to what they are now. That's truly heart-warming," the governor said. —Jhonner Napallacan, Inquirer Visayas, and AFP

BodyTalk demo today

BODYTALK, A REVOLUTION-ary health care system that has spread to 28 countries in the world, will soon be taught for the first time in the Philippines.

US-based teacher Ben Matasso, an advanced practitioner currently teaching in Singapore and Hong Kong, will give a free introduction on the BodyTalk System in the guide today, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

At the same time, BodyTalk practitioners Jennifer Friesen, who introduced the system to the Philippine uniform last year, will demonstrate basic techniques called BodyTalk Access.

The two demonstrations will be at the Bandad Children Hospital center in Quezon Memorial Circle as a preview to the Modules 1 and 2 training Matasso will be conducting at a later date.

Persons invited to touch BodyTalk Access in a one-day session on the powerful and easy to learn five techniques on Jan. 30 and Feb. 6 at the Good Shepherd Convent on Aurora Boulevard, Quezon City, and in Davao City on Feb. 3.

BodyTalk is a consciousness-based health care system. It combines Western medical expertise, the energy dynamics of acupuncture, osteopathic and chiropractic philosophy, subtle-physiology and the insights of modern physics.

Manuals says that it is unlike any other health care system in that it helps people to restore the habits, attitudes, beliefs and perceptions, which have led to their disease.

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OPINION

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EDITORIAL

Damaged institution

RE: SATUR OCAMPO OF BAYAN MUNA HAS publicly advised the candidates he supports that if he wants to become president, he has "to act responsibly and show leadership," and he his own adversaries by confronting the charges hurled against him. But Ocampo's advice apparently counts for nothing, because Sen. Manuel Villar continues to dodge the issues by engineering a boycott of sessions, attempting a change in the Senate leadership, and finally, having his political dependents do the fighting for him. Senators Alan Peter Cayetano, Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Joker Arroyo have been reduced to the level of administration defenders like Representatives Lito Villafuerte and Edcel Lagman, and Speaker Prospero Nograles.

At the Senate Monday—where the recommendation of the committee of the whole to censure Villar for personally profiting from the C-5 extension project was being discussed, Cayetano pursued a strategy of enraging his colleagues so as to deflect attention from the main issue. Cayetano who once advertised himself as a brave going toe-to-toe against officials who would dodge accountability, now dances around the issues by running one accusation by means of innuendo after another. He ended up reminding that each of his charges was not only unfair but without basis, but his mission—to delay and deflect—had been accomplished.

In an attempt to score cheap political points, Pimentel dismissed Sen. Rodolfo Biazon as an "abused child," as if he would endure attack victims to defend abusers. In a similar vein, he lowered the standing of his generation and the chamber to which he belongs to the level of the gutter with his uncouth and profane remarks about marital "insertions."

Arroyo, who had been evidently on the slogan "Hang bad ito, lagot ka" and had once upon a time proclaimed that "we cannot have a nation run by a thief," insisting on the solemnity and sacredness of the presidential oath of office, similarly dodged the issue and hid behind a shelter of legalities, even bringing up the late Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr.'s principled refusal to submit to a military court that was fully intent on decreeing his execution.

Never has the Senate sunk so low, with former prosecutors of accountability acting as shields of impunity.

And those cheering with Pimentel, Cayetano and Arroyo till far it. One by one, they charged, sounds unerring, as the red tapes being waved by the allies of the absent Villar. By turns, they thundered and shrilled out of anus proper.

The Senate thus degenerated into children squabbling. As if the public should care about the brittle nexus of self-accords of our senators.

Forgotten in the name-calling is that issues first raised by Arroyo himself in 1998 have long festered and, indeed, have ended up compounded by his target then: Manuel Villar. The C-5 controversy is but the tip of an iceberg.

Arroyo, at least, has consistently defended the Arroyo administration for dodging the issues by means of increasingly exotic legal stratagems. The similarity with the administration's denying the validity of the court of public opinion, where the fitness for office of candidates for public office is ultimately determined, ought to bother senators engaged in acting on Villar's behalf today the same arguments used on President Macapagal-Arroyo's behalf yesterday.

The strategy refined by Palace experience is simple, and durable: First, demand to know "where is your evidence?" When evidence is shown, challenge the accuser to "bring it to the proper forum?" Meaning only the courts—not Congress or various constitutional commissions—should investigate and judge official wrongdoing. At the same time, keep loathing that even valid issues amount to nothing more than "political noise," while dubbing any unidentified charges as proof that everyone is the same anyway.

In his first State of the Nation Address in 1962, President Diosdado Macapagal declared, "It's second effort to usher the young in virtue and mortality only to let them realize as they grow up that their elders are neither moral nor virtuous." The Senate is destroying any illusions the youth may still have that they can look up to their elders to provide an example worth emulating.

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Villar's C-5 Extension vs. Noynoy's SCTEX

SEN. MANNY VILLAR MUST BE HURTING AT the C-5 extension scandal. With the majority bloc in the Senate bent on promulgating the findings and conclusion of the Senate committee of the whole's recommendation that he be censured for conflict of interest, his allies in Congress are trying to ruin the tableau on Sen. Noynoy Aquino who is still ahead of him in the surveys on the presidential derby in spite of Villar spending billions in advertisements.

Cavite Rep. Jesus Crispin Remulla, who was a poster at last Monday's flagfloor in Manila, together with the Honasan, Enrile and son Dan, Binkilo and Bluementritt—Rep. Teddy Casiño and vice-serial candidate Satur Ocampo, declared that Noynoy also has a road scandal, just like Villar. That is the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEX) that runs through Hacienda Luisita.

If the C-5 extension road is the route through Villar's properties in Parañaque and Las Piñas that overpriced, so was the portion of Buendia-Quezon through which the SCTEX passed, Remulla said. If the C-5 extension was realigned to make it pass through the Villar properties, so was SCTEX realigned to make it pass through Luisita, which is owned by Noynoy's family. If the construction of C-5 extension was overpriced, so was SCTEX, he said.

The crux of the SCTEX issue is that Hacienda Luisita was paid by the government P80 million for the right of way for 83 hectares of land that was inside part of the expressway. The issue is also one of overpricing, Remulla said, because the P80 million translates to P100 paid by the government to Luisita for every square meter of land (8.3% in a time when the selling price of farmland in Tarlac was only from P5 to P8 per square meter). Therefore, the Luisita land paid for by the government was overpriced by at least P92 per sq m.

On top of the P80 million, government also used P173 million of taxpayers' money to construct a road interchange that connected Luisita to private road to SCTEX. Other private companies like Manpalasan, Asia Brewery, Green Fields and Southwoods paid the government no such properties would be connected to the South Luzon Expressway. These companies paid the Philippine National Construction Corp. (PNCC) P243 million each for the interchanges that connected their properties to ELEX. So how come it is the opposite with Luisita? Instead of Luisita paying the government for the interchange that connected Luisita's private road to SCTEX, it was the government that paid Luisita, Remulla said. The overpricing has been confirmed by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) during a congressional hearing.

But it was not the government alone that got a raw deal from the SCTEX project, Remulla continued. The poor farmers who had been toiling at Luisita for decades also got a raw deal, in the supposed sweeten of 32.5 percent of Luisita, the farmers should have gotten at least P15 million of the P80 million RROW payment. Instead, they were only given dividends ranging from 10 centavos to P1, Remulla said.

The Honasan, members of Noynoy's Liberal Party (Remulla is a Nacionalista) merely laughed off the Cavite rep's remarks. SCTEX cannot be compared to C-5 Extension, they said. Noynoy had nothing to do with SCTEX whereas Villar used his personal influence to have C-5 realigned and have another P500 million assessed in the budget to fund the right-of-way.

Neal H. Cruz

AS I SEE IT

Senatrix A House committee investigation established that Noynoy used his influence as a congressman in 2004 to have the original route diverted to Luisita which at that time was largely inaccessible. In fact, Noynoy owned at the proponent of the SCTEX project that diverted by hundred his family.

The congressional hearings elicited the fact that Noynoy used his influence as a legislator not only to push the SCTEX project, but specifically the route connection of Hacienda Luisita to it, at a huge cost to the government and the taxpayers. The last official of Noynoy's machinations to that from an original estimate of P18.7 billion in 1999, the SCTEX project cost was adjusted in P21 billion in 2004 and, by the time it was finished, the cost had ballooned to a whopping P32.896 billion, or twice its original price.

Noynoy made sure he was present in most meetings related to the construction of SCTEX. To show their displeas for the congressional committee investigating the SCTEX scandal, Noynoy and the Cojuangcos ordered Luisita's security men to bar congressmen from making an ocular inspection of the Luisita road interchange. The government funded the P176.58 interchange, but the representatives of the people were prevented from visiting the site," Remulla said.

While all this was going on at Manila Hotel's Rizal Restaurant, Noynoy was somewhere else in the hotel with Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, having just some lines the unveiling of his mother's monument to why, in fairness to him, I went seamlessly to look for him in the could reply on Remulla's accusations, but the senator got was quite scornful.

Anyway, in the name of fairness and balanced reporting, we will give Sen. Noynoy Aquino every opportunity to answer Remulla's accusations regarding the SCTEX-Luisita project.

'Mahirap'

IT'S ALMOST ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU BELIEVE it as inevitable hand that guides human affairs. Since already the best laid plans of mice and Manny have been thwarted by an unexpected turn of events. Unexpected at least from his end.

The first was Gary Aquino—the idea of involving something everyone thought was dead. Before that, Manny Villar was the leading presidential candidate...aided in no small way by a cadaver of spunky that made people settle for the lesser evil, the mediocre, the passé so to say. But with Gary dying and Noynoy's ball losing form, the rubber changed suddenly, the Edsa spirit resurrected with a vengeance, with its hallmarks of idealism and voluntarism, people were demanding not just the honest over the good. And just as suddenly Villar—as well indeed as GMA and Erap, who had backed everyone in the local scope—was swept aside. Condemned now to languish in the shadows, Villar finds himself desperate to catch up with the new barometer, resorting to interjecting a commissioned survey in various ways, not unlike the devil quoting Scripture to suit his purposes.

The second is the historic erasure of Villar by unethical conduct. He hasn't been arrested, ing the motion, preferring instead to plead his case before media. But whether before the media or the office, he has been put on the defensive as a three-term incumbent senator. Even the Erap camp, exposed him to open the year with a pro Manny. He did try to, accusing usages of the Mendiola massacre and evoking the specter of Hacienda Luisita. Neither has flown off, which has little to do with the Aquino camp putting them down with brilliant plays. Or indeed with doing anything to put them down. It has to do simply with Villar himself—allowing, if not ample evidence of them, ample diversion from them. It is his world case that has grabbed public attention.

It's not just SOBs, as Joey Salceda observed of the Tuesday case, that were out to be lucky. Decent ones do too. Or the wind has changed. It's no longer GMAs enemies who are dying. The religious of course are bound to say this but look at all, somebody up there must be making mischief.

'Mahirap'

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

making mischief.

Whatever the outcome of the Senate hearings—and this is not going to go away easily, so gulp the dirtiness of the exchanges—the case will hang over Villar's campaign like an albatross, giving it the aura of a doomed ship. His own defense little helps to show since the incorrect actual appointees, being either extraneous or politically motivated, or ghi (which he did was perfectly legal, if a guilty unethical). Of course it's politically motivated, but he didn't particularly rail against the concept when the Department of Justice filed murder charges against Panfilo Lacson at the very time the demonstrators were going berserk. As to his justification the C-5 diversion as legal, it doesn't make things better, it makes it worse.

Villar's argument is that the diversion has greatly benefited the residents of Las Piñas and environs. Of course it has also greatly benefited him, which is incontrovertible, and indeed increasing its value. Unfortunately for him, that is not an incidental point. That is the heart of the matter. If the road had been diverted to other towns, then they would have greatly benefited from it, the more importantly, that simply means that anything Villar does to improve his fortunes can always be argued to be legal by being beneficial to at least some people, thereby ruining the prospect of a rational policy—a chilling one should he become president—that says What is good for Vista Land is good for the country.

That is a rationalization of "What is good for Boeing is good for America," a concept that has driven the US to imperialistic wars, to gross cost to its citizens, for the good of a few multinationals. On a smaller scale (though not for us who have to bear the brunt of its ravages), that is a concept that can drive the country into, neither government nor the citizens knowing where Villar ends and the country begins, and vice versa. The day president urging that what is good for you is good for ever body else is the day you should head for a methouse or to jail in lieu of Malacañang. Of course it's not always easy to see where a malefactor or jail ends and Malacañang begins, but that's another story.

I am glad Satur Ocampo has found his voice, holding his standard-bearer face the music, however the music sounds like Satur's "Bayanin." It can't help his cause harping on Reconsidra Lumia while running a blind eye on this, unless the argument is that corruption only ends the rich and not the poor, the landed and not the landless.

These always wondered why of all the penalties doomed to images in identities, Villar had to choose being "mahirap." The last time somebody tried it, who was it names Mitra, who promised himself to do so at whose he rode a horse and looked every inch like a tsotsin, he only shot himself in the foot. Villar repeats the farce, projecting himself as poor in a campaign that teems with money, rocks of money, organizations with money—of the 46 points that give Villar the edge in surveys, which is not unlike that of a soldier having post, just whose standard bearer is named Manny. He face is the last place he will shoot.

Mahirap is a curious word that translates to English both as "poor" and "hard" or "difficult." The way things are, Villar may have just have found the perfect label for himself. Maliwanag: mahirap kumapin, or hard to talk to, or, fuming to stand before the senate to explain his conduct, mahirap paglunukutan, or hard to trust, you never know what kinds of concessions he will justify in future, mahirap mag-kolehiyo, or impossible in the inside while remain in the outside.

Someone like that prepares to lead you, you're bound to say.

Mahirap us.

Senate mayhem

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE SENSE ON MONDAY REEKED OF THE smell of credits and septic tank effluence in the aftermath of the clash between supporters of Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile and Sen. Manuel Villar over a committee report recommending the censure of Villar for unethical conduct in the C-5 road submission project. Hostilities erupted on the floor after Enrile terminated Committee Report No. 786, which he had prepared as chair of the Senate committee of the whole. Enrile was able to submit the report for debate on the floor after he received a quorum of 19 out of 23 senators, including the two-thirds (14 senators) of the session last week. The Senate failed twice to take up the report because of lack of quorum and lack of time.

The condemnation on the floor was a test of strength between Enrile and Villar, who was accused by Enrile of trying to stop the debate on the committee report. Enrile said the earlier boycott was "an effort to prevent consideration of the report" because Villar and his allies "don't want the public to hear what is in the report."

Enrile appeared to have won in the end, but it came at a great cost to the Senate as an institution. Its conflict resolution used as a stepping stone to its disintegration. The senators' behavior during the debate of the drainage in the Senate over the report, which cannot but be damaging to the jurisdictional fact of Villar, who has been struggling to catch up with the wide lead of Liberal Party presidential candidate Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino. The unbuilding of the reputation on Monday showed that Enrile had the numbers in quantity plus by Villar's allies to censure Enrile as Senate president.

The floor debate plunged the chamber into bedlam marked by harsh and bitter exchange of name-calling in which senators hurled invective at every direction to the wind. The exchange was so heated that parliamentary rules had a hard time regaining inhibitions and intemperate language from the Hansard (the official record of parliamentary debates in democracies).

Despite the start of the debate, Villar did not show up to defend himself before his peers. Two other senators, Panfilo Lacson and Lito Lapid, did not show up.

Villar continued to be defiant. Rather than appear in the plenary, he held court in his Senate office and faced the media. He said he was willing to answer the charges against him any time, but only outside the chamber. "I was always prepared to answer questions in public," he said. "I refused to be afforded any justice" in the Senate.

Whether or not his refusal to face his colleagues on an official inquiry would improve his popularity ratings remains problematic. His evasive tactics are anchored on the assumption that the persistent put on him to have his Senate peers can only make him the underdog and earn him public sympathy. The unanswered committee report still continues to haunt him during the remaining weeks of the presidential campaign and the public will continue to demand explanations on the findings of the report.

The committee omitted volumes of evidence presented at the hearings, which Villar did not attend. The report has 69 pages.

Villar's camp suffered a setback at the plenary when his ally Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel questioned the Senate for tackling the Enrile report. Pimentel argued that Senate Rule No. 147), which sought to dismiss the complaint laid by Sen. Jinggoy Madrigal against Villar for unethical behavior stemming from the C-5 project, should be given priority by the Senate because it came ahead of the Enrile report. But Enrile pointed out that according to Senate rules, "a committee is always in order any time."

Pimentel backed off after Senate Majority Leader Miguel Zubiri reminded him that at last week's session, it was agreed that the report would be taken up first Monday.

In his presentation, Enrile summed up the committee report which found that Villar had engaged in improper and unethical conduct when he used his position to push for the C-5 extension project in Las Piñas and Parañaque without declaring conflict of interest. Madrigal alleged that Villar violated the Senate rules by pushing the P300-million project and by diversion so that it would benefit his real estate business.

Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano, Villar's ally, presented Senate Resolution 1472, which is claimed to spell out Villar's legal defense. The report was signed in November 2009 by 12 senators who claimed it improved the sense of the Senate to clear Villar of wrongdoing and to dismiss the complaint against him.

Two senators later withdrew their signatures from the resolution and joined 18 others in signing the draft committee report. Enrile said he decided to submit the report to the Senate floor.

In effect the fallout on the C-5 issue, the Villar camp has tabled on Enrile in step down from the Senate presidency on the ground that, in the event of a failure of election in 2010, he cannot act as president because he is seeking reelection and will cease to be Senate president on June 30. This demand seeks to prevent a power vacuum arising from an election failure, allowing Enrile to stage a coup. But the coup against to a red herring and is based on a hypothetical contingency.

Some senators have proposed that Enrile step down before the Senate adjourns in February. Such a step would abort deliberations on the committee report which is evident aiming to Villar.

According to Enrile, Villar seeks to put an ally in control of the Senate in time for the canvassing of votes in the presidential election.

Cut the salt

THE LATEST ISSUE (JANUARY 28, 2010) OF THE NEW England Journal of Medicine (NEJOM) has an article stirring up raging US government negotiations on the salt content of processed foods as a way of reducing heart diseases.

Americans, including physicians and health professionals, are usually quite averse to government interventions in health matters, so that recommendation is considered quite radical. The article's authors, Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo of the University of California in San Francisco and others from Harvard University and Columbia University, are convinced though that the intervention is necessary, convincing that 44,000 to 92,000 lives can be saved each year just by reducing dietary salt by 3 gram/day.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

Considering the Filipino love for salty foods, we should be looking into our own salt intake, and its implications for public health.

Before proceeding, I have to explain the terms "salt" and "sodium." I am going to use the one the media although technically they are not exactly the same. The chemical name of salt or table salt is sodium chloride. But sodium can also be found in other foods and in other forms, such as in the sodium benzoate (food preservative) and monosodium glutamate (seasoning).

Our bodies need sodium for transmission of nerve impulses and for muscle function. The problem is that too much salt in our bodies becomes harmful. Sodium attracts and holds water and in our body, this means blood volume increases. This makes the heart work harder, and can lead to hypertension and coronary heart disease. High fluid content in the brain also causes stroke (blood vessels and could lead to strokes.

There are variances in people's vulnerabilities to high sodium in the body. Africans-Americans, for example, seem more sensitive to high sodium than Caucasians. People with kidney disease have problems getting rid of the excess water caused by sodium. Because of their still under-developed kidneys, babies are also more vulnerable.

The US government recommends a daily intake of less than 2.4 g of salt. But the actual consumption is about 10 g a day. The 2.3 g for some is per day. It's not been difficult trying to get Americans to reduce this intake because about 75 percent of the salt in an American diet comes from processed foods. This is why the FDA's action recommends processed food intervention to get food companies to reduce the salt in their products. The authors state that in Japan, the United Kingdom, Finland, Ireland and many other countries have reduced salt intake through various regulations to add content in processed foods, plus advice consumer measures like proper labeling and public education.

I have to say there are still some medical professionals who ignore the link between high salt and hypertension (high blood pressure) but it is difficult to ignore all the research coming out now showing all kinds of links between high salt and cardiovascular diseases in general. Not only that, for a country like the Philippines with our high incidence of kidney diseases, we need to be extra careful with our salt intake. Kidney problems as a double pain: first by actually contributing to or causing kidney diseases, and second, by having many harmful effects, such as heart disease, to patients with already problematic kidneys.

"Iyon," yun?

Let's look at the various points where sodium enters the 98 spins diet.

First, sodium is found naturally in many foods. I was surprised to find out that even 1 cup of low fat milk, for example, has 107 mg of sodium.

Besides table salt, Filipinos add more sodium to diets mainly through toyo (soy sauce) and patis (fish sauce). The sodium content of toyo and patis can be quite high, especially with the way we use it. I know people who put soy sauce on mangoes! Remember a tablespoon of soy sauce contains 900 to 1,000 mg of sodium, so about two and a half tablespoons already puts you at the maximum recommended daily allowance for healthy adults.

It should be easy to control the sodium content of home-cooked meals but when it comes to restaurants, you're bound to get an overdose with foods saturated in salt, sweets, toyo and patis. Many people are unaware that restaurants intentionally make their foods high in sodium to encourage more thirst, which makes people thirsty, and restaurants can make a lot more money on the beverages than on food.

Then we get to processed foods. In the United States, the sodium usually comes in canned vegetables and soups. Access Foods analyzed the sodium in 1,000 food items and found that the highest sodium content was in soups.

Here in the Philippines, with a premium placed on cash (especially stuff as Campbell's soups and non-computer figure. In addition to all that processed stuff, we shouldn't forget large amounts of salted products, namely fish.

The point probably have much higher sodium in their diets. Many of the poorest households still just serve instant noodles, relying on the flavor packs to whet the appetite. And the contents of the flavor packs? Read the labels and you'll find all kinds of sources of sodium, from salt to monosodium glutamate.

Slices, shavings?

To cut down on sodium, we have to learn to read the labels on processed foods, which is a problem when we are buying during and open in the markets. The dried fish (and squid) sold in major urbanizers can be made just by eliminating canned or packaged soups, which tend to have the highest sodium content (especially instant ones).

Be particularly careful about sodium intake with babies, with their still-weak kidneys. Minimize or eliminate processed foods, if possible. Monitor sodium, too, with elderly people and those who already have cardiovascular or kidney diseases.

Salt sensitivity varies from person to person. Some your own family members, especially the elderly, if their blood pressure goes up even after small amounts of salty foods. Do some forensics here: you might find people resorting after too many olders (seafood or brine or salt water), or even Chinese dried meat called *tinapa*.

There are increasing number of salt substitutes available but do be careful because some contain potassium chloride. Again potassium is important for the body but, like sodium, it can be problematic in high amounts, affecting the balance of fluids in the body because of artificial salt substitutes, try herbs and spices, or even the rest (postings) from citrus fruits, and fruit juices.

Because food tastes are culturally acquired, they can be modified. I still remember my own deficiencies of "saving" (lasa), which, I realized was an acquired taste in addictions. With growing health awareness, and easy life problems such hypertension, I've been able to cut down on my salt intake. I can't really never use table salt, say some or pasis. I don't miss the saltiness, and in fact, I want quite negatively now to finish that an over-salty entry. By negatively I don't mean having a meal free of high blood pressure but a simple "food message."

With time, we will see the cultural shifts, away from "pass the salt" to "pass the salt."

("Projected Effect of Dietary Salt Reductions on Future Cardiovascular Disease" can be downloaded from www.nejm.org.)

Email to mtan@inquirer.com.ph

Farewell to the Sultan

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"GOOD-BYE SULTAN CORAZÓN" READ THE BANNER that hung outside at yesterday's farewell party for Sultan Pablo Palungan. Literally, a meeting of relatives) is a weekly modern because it is put together by a group of media workers and featuring current events. Modern, like pretty much everything else, was a memorial service for the late Press Secretary Jorge Bocobo, with the senses (and more) paying tribute to the man they had dubbed their "Sultan."

Present at the service were Bocobo's widow Marit, and relatives, friends and colleagues from the way taking the women's claim that they constituted no less than his late husband's "harem." Marit, who apparently took it in stride, telling us that she now understands how Jorge was able to juggle his time and manage to live together without acrimony. "I think in time they came to consider each other as sisters," said Marit, "and right now I feel like I am among my sisters."

Addressing the gathering, Marit said that when Bocobo joined the Arroyo administration nine years ago, he was concerned about how the family would and managed radio station in Cebu would be affected by the sprawling cast of his time to Manila. He finally left the management of the station in his behalf. But, finally letting go of his responsibility to the stepped down two years ago to devote her time and efforts to civic involvements.

If he had survived till July 2010, which time he would have left government service upon the term of President Arroyo, Bocobo would most likely have ended up resuming his interrupted career as a broadcaster. But, as the saying goes, God had other plans.

* * *

SPEAKERS at the service were out to proclaim Jorge Bocobo's one of the friendliest, most amiable officials of the Arroyo administration.

I have said that no matter how many or ugly my comments about the Arroyo regime and its minions, or how many put-shots I had taken, he was invariably nice about it, choosing no sign at our next meeting that he minded the words written about him, or that he ever read them.

Jimmy Paredes, now a columnist at Malaya but one intimate with Bocobo's work being a his last press secretary himself, later affirmed this observation. "He was the best," said the longtime Enrile staff of him. Paredes said, "But you're right, he never gave any sign that he had been hurt or annoyed by anything he read."

It was Fernandez, a regular attendee of Sulong Palungan, who dubbed the group of women his "harem." And he was, ironically! Bocobo Stringer of the Bulletin, also a "kissing bandit," greeting all the women with a fond buss on the cheek. "We think you were kissed Jorge Congo loved you and was devoted to you," she noted, in an observation I must extend as during our last dinner. Bernardo mentioned, with a note of longing in his voice, how much he looked forward to going home to Cebu each in March when his sister in Malasiqui was over.

* * *

THE SERVICE was preceded by a Mass celebrated by "kissing priest" Fr. Arnold Arnedo.

His presence must have been the reason "his kissy" (or) cluster of participants was treated by a fairly good crowd. Despite the late hour, and the fact that Fr. Fausto was starting, he was provided with a long line of communicants to attend to.

It was my first time to come here to face with the priest, and I was told to watch out for people being "shy," that is, falling into a daze upon feeling his healing touch. And indeed, one or two did collapse in the floor, adding a bit of suspense to the proceedings.

* * *

BEYOND the country, there must be hundreds, if not thousands of women who, each in her own way, are transforming their neighborhoods and communities, helping their own and other families attain a better standard of living, or serving as an inspiration to other women and girls.

The media has likewise been aware of women and their better-known counterparts is that the "running" women have little or no access to publicity or public attention. They toil quietly, but with the same sense of dedication and commitment as their male counterparts, to better their own lot as well as that of other women and the rest of the nation.

In its desire to give recognition to these women, the Philippine Daily Inquirer and the Philippines has launched a search for the "Unsung Pioneers Heroes Award 2010." The awards seek to bring to public attention the stories of women who have made a their life's mark to uplift the well-being of other women and girls in their communities.

Carmen Amores Her, governor of 10 Philippine Regions, the overall chair of the awards committee, says that "among Women's Heroes [award] will, it is hoped, "motivate other women and children to rise beyond poverty and use the disaster to enjoy the fullness of their life."

To be eligible for nomination, women must have made a difference in the lives of their families and girls, particularly in the last two years prior to the nomination in the areas of generating economic opportunities to alleviate poverty; protect women's and girls' rights; and, in the case of women and children in rural beyond poverty and use the disaster to enjoy the fullness of their life."

The winners will be proclaimed in ceremonies to coincide with the celebration of Women's Month.

Just a colony, not a state

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

IN 1898 THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA made her debut as a world power when she emerged the victor of the 1898 Spanish-American War. At the time, she did not think much of the 1,000 Philippine-American War and downplayed it as a mere "insurrection" or revolt against an established government. Emilio Aguinaldo's government, our first republic, was not recognized by any other country, but, technically, there was no such thing as the Philippine-American War, it was just the Philippine Insurrection.

It is understandable that Spanish or US history is not taught in our schools because it would help young Filipinos understand why our country is the way it is.

One of the overlooked areas in Philippine history is the negotiation in the Treaty of Peace between the US and Spain that was loaned out in Paris towards the end of 1898. Felipe Agoncillo made representations on behalf of the Philippine Republic that was not recognized, so we had no say when the US acquired the Philippines from Spain for the magnificent amount of $20 million.

Historians are fortunate that one of the American peace commissioners, Whitelaw Reid, left a diary that is invaluable in debates for and against the annexation of the Philippines following the war. Before leaving for France, the Peace Commission met with US President William McKinley in the White House and their discussion on the fate of the Philippines can be summarized as follows:

The US needed coaling stations in the Pacific, so she must have stations for her ships in Manila, the Ladrones (Islands) and Caroline Islands. But leaving the annexation of Hawaii, the US wanted a stable line from Hawaii to the Philippines. Therefore, she must have the whole of the Philippine archipelago, as all the very least the important ports. After Aug. 13, 1898, Manila was in the hands of the Americans and though they did not control the rest of the archipelago, Aguinaldo's forces were under the control of Emilio Aguinaldo's government), they felt that by having the capital from which the entire archipelago was governed, they could brag that "the Philippines was ours by right of conquest."

The US Peace Commission was divided on the Philippines because some members felt it would be practical to keep or take only Manila as the gateway of American trade in the Far East. Then, as now, the US had its eyes on China.

Another supporter was to keep Manila a free city like those in the Hanseatic League, and for the US to guarantee its independence. If the 15 km Manila military advisers suggested that all power territory be taken as well, at least for the protection of the capital. From this came the notion of annexation that the US keep the entire Luzon, or that Luzon be divided at the peninsula, in the southern part.

There are now the Muslim South was a challenge. Then in many discussions, Mindanao was always left out. It was recommended that if the US military was for the US to take the Philippines, Mindanao was not to be part of the deal. As a matter of law, one of the peace commissioners suggested that Mindanao be given to the Dutch who had nearby colonies, like Indonesia. As Holland was friendly to the US, it was deemed a better option than leaving which was also interested in Mindanao.

It was not obvious at the time that McKinley had already made up his mind to take the Philippines even if there were always denials that the US was seeking territorial expansion. If you look closely at the composition of the five-man Peace Commission, there were three "anti-imperialists" that always outnumbered the two "anti-imperialists" whose leaders were brought to a vote.

Reid's diaries make things clear when he wrote: "Our true national interest, therefore, was to seek a development for our commerce, particularly with China, which would be neutralized if we held no port and could not produce. The Philippines seemed to me to meet these conditions, and so did China. The control of the Pacific Ocean pointed almost exclusively to a commerce under those conditions and seemed to me the direction to offer the largest and best room for our future for the country.

"I deprecated in the discussion about the difficulty of administering those distant possessions. What lesser nations had done successfully, a limited people need not be too dubbed in (doing). The US, he said, would involve unlimited reforms in our civil service, which would be an advantage anyway. The commission interposed no objection and there would be little difficulty in re-modeling our present territorial system so as to adapt it to use of these islands whenever it might be thought best to retain them. Some have said that they should be governed permanently as colonies, never with the eventual idea of permitting their admission as states to the Union."

Despite the appeal of a "benevolent assimilation" policy that would have the effect of isolating the Philippines" "nativism" and "Orientalism?" it was clear that the Philippines was to maintain a colony to teach the Filipinos still dreaming about statehood.

These days government officials and diplomats are advised not to keep diaries less there be subpoenaed in court cases or congressional investigations. But while they may be practical politically, it is bad historically.

Comments are welcome at aocampo@inquirer.com.ph

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Funny proposal: marriage contract with date of expiry

LETTERS

CONTEMPORARY RECENTLY A GROUP OF MEN talking about the "funny" proposal to impose an expiration date to marriage contracts.

I first heard of this proposal over radio in a cab as jokes but accompanied with some laughs. I was thankful because the disc jockey had the mind to think it sounded like a joke.

But to hear a group of professionals, one of them passionately arguing for the "contract-ual" of this proposal was no laughing matter. On the other hand, I was thankful that the men were seriously looking into the issue except that he forgot the uniqueness of the marriage contract, which is fundamentally different from all other human contracts. For in fact, the contracting parties commit things essential to them—property, family ties. But in marriage, what we spouses commit is their very being.

Perhaps, that professional has forgotten what marriage is all about. He hopes he has lost faith in marriage which is master to him. Perhaps, he is thinking that marriage is a contract only and nothing else. Because of this, I am hoping that human beings can be classified which their decision "unless," the way we were objects than are no longer of one to another—but society is gradually giving up our values system in favor of mere lifestyles and not more, in the name of what we think is progress.

But what is most amazing is that proponents of lasting love contracts exhibit crippling unfamiliarity to offered on TV testimonies and hymns. If man is to live up to his dignity of a thinking being, then he should be constantly asking why, why and why. Then he might yet be able to remind himself that jokes are meant to be laughed at.

—CRIS CANOL
cespar@gmail.com

Why rich people cannot afford many kids

THE RICH CANNOT AFFORD TO HAVE many children because most children will deprive them of time to make more and more money. Only the poor can afford to have many children because their time (that God) still think their best efforts to provide for their children.

If only the government would honestly use the billions and trillions of money allocated for good governance and public service, including proper infrastructure development, good education and health care, God, all of us can work for a decent life. Then those who made the morality of ensuring pregnancy as ridiculous like the proponents of the Reproductive Health (RH) bill do, and those who consider abortion simply as a process of "reaching into the contents," would have no reason to have their morality or re-

A large majority of women who seek abortion are those who had failed in their attempt at contraception. Legalizing artificial contraception through distribution will surely lead to legalizing abortion.

Also, doctors do not have to be sick in order to treat their patients with similar cases of cancer, tuberculosis and other sicknesses. In the same way, the Church is not by nature divided. Like teaching of the Holy Father the Pope on faith and morals, do not have to have first-hand experience of one that life in order to teach us about the sacredness of life and family.

—LEILA M. DE LIMA
Commission on Family and Life,
Mary Mother of
Good Counsel Parish,
Pantabangan City,
email: lelisandje@gmail.com

A great loss to media not only to Malacañang

THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB OF THE PHILIPpines mourns with a heavy heart the sudden and untimely passing of Press Secretary Cerge Remonde.

Secretary Remonde was a friend who had shown time and time again, during his tenure, his commitment to and unswerving love for the media profession. And he was a staunch defender of press freedom.

While we disagreed on certain issues, he was always willing to listen to our suggestions and concerns, always earning the respect of our members in the profession.

His passing is a great loss not only to the Arroyo administration which he served with distinction and honor but also to especially to the local media practitioners who lost an icon, a leader and a comrade.

On behalf of the NPC, we wish to convey our sincerest condolences to his family and loved ones.

Secretary Remonde will be missed. Rest in eternal!

—BENNY ANTIPORDA,
president,
National Press Club of the Philippines

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John Robert Powers

ALABANG BRANCH NOW OPEN!

70 Filipinos from Haiti arriving this week–Owwa

By Jerome Aning

SOME 70 FILIPINOS REPORTED fled by the Philippine government from Haiti are set to arrive in Manila this week.

In a statement, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) administrator Carmelita Dimzon said the first batch of 16 Filipinos would arrive on Friday at 5 a.m. on board Philippine Airlines (PAL) flight PR 103. The next batch of 54 Filipinos would arrive the next day.

From Haiti, the Filipinos would fly straight to the Dominican Republic and then to Los Angeles, California, for the connecting PAL flight to Manila. They would be accompanied by Owwa officers from the United States, the statement said.

Dimzon said she and the Owwa team would be at the Terminal 2 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) to greet the Filipinos and assist them in clearing immigration.

Assistance

Labor Secretary Marianito Roque earlier ordered the Owwa to advance the cost of repatriating the Filipinos. The repatriation is a joint effort of the labor and foreign affairs departments.

Dimzon said the government would also be offering livelihood assistance to the returning Filipinos.

The names of the arriving Filipinos would be announced as soon as they are available. Their relatives in the country would also be contacted about their arrival schedules.

Meanwhile, Owwa said also assisted 300 overseas Filipino workers repatriated from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on Monday night.

The all-male group, mostly returnees who had quit their jobs because of labor-intensive violations and maltreatment, arrived at 11 p.m. on board Royal Brunei Airlines flight BI-889 at Naia Terminal 2.

They were offered temporary lodging at the Owwa-Halfway House at the Owwa Center in Pasay City.

Comelec: Voting machines have 16-hour batteries

From page A1

than 11 hours—from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m.

The PCOS machine can run up to 16 hours using its own batteries, he said. The canvassing centers will also have power one can standby in case of blackouts.

On Monday, Metro Manila and portions of Bulacan, Cavite and Laguna suffered rotating brownouts as Meralco power after the final power plant in Pampanga malfunctioned.

Officials of the final power plant have assured the public that the plant's operation will continue by coal, month when the next shipment of coal to fuel the plant arrives.

The plant still has a stock of 40,000 tons of coal that can last up to the second week of February, said Gregg Remauldez, external affairs head of Team Energy, the firm that runs the final power plant.

The 1,200-megawatt (MW) final coal-fired power plant is made up of two units. final 2 was shut down on Jan. 6 due to a shortage of coal supply.

Remauldez said the running unit, final 1, tripped on Monday due to a "feed water pump problem," resulting to a blackout from 3:08 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in Metro Manila and nearby areas.

Confluence of events

Remauldez said the Monday blackout was a result of a technical problem. "There was just confluence of events, with power plants simultaneously down because of different reasons," he said.

The Luzon power plant in Bataan also shut down because of lack of coal, the Philippine power plant in Quezon was on preventive maintenance, and the Calaca power plant in Batangas was having trouble with its boiler, he said.

Team Energy, he said, was hoping that San Miguel Energy Corp., its coal supplier, would solve the supply problem so the final plant could operate at its full capacity.

A power situation update from the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP) said final 1 produced an initial load of 222 MW at 6:30 p.m. on Monday.

"[It] is now running at 333 MW," the update said.

Yellow alert

Despite the repair of the final power unit, NGCP has placed the Luzon grid on "yellow alert" because of the low power reserve.

Carlito Claudio, NGCP vice president for systems operations, said the yellow alert means that the Luzon grid was not meeting the required reserve level of 1,200 MW. The reserve is currently 800 MW.

The Luzon grid has been on yellow alert since Jan. 8, after the second unit of the final coal power facility had shutdown due to lack of coal, according to Claudio. The second unit has a generating capacity of 647 MW.

Contingency plan

Despite the machines' capability to run without external power source, the Department of Energy (DOE) and the National Power Corp. (Napocor) have submitted a contingency plan to the Comelec to address possible power failure during the election period.

Despite the critical power reserve in Luzon, Energy Secretary Angelo T. Reyes said he has assured the public that "there will be no power interruption during the May 2010 elections."

Full-scale power supply

Reyes told reporters that the operators of power plants had scheduled their maintenance shutdowns earlier to avoid scheduling them during the elections.

The DOE has already presented its power contingency plan to the Comelec to ensure "adequate and full-scale" power supply during the May general elections.

Reyes-run Napocor earlier said it would push through with its 50-billion power contingency plan, even as the Comelec had reportedly rejected its proposal.

But of the two-year contingency plan was to provide backup measures particularly during the elections to ensure adequate power supply.

"We don't need the Comelec nod for this contingency plan. We just presented it so we are properly coordinated," said Napocor president Froilan A. Tangpuz.

Part of the outlay of about P9 billion, or P3 billion higher than earlier estimates, would be for the provision of interim power supply arrangements, particularly during and after the elections, even before the suppliers of the committed power projects come in.

Mobile plants

The plan will require several megawatts of mobile plants, which can be moved from one area to another to ensure that power supply problems can be immediately addressed.

Napocor also planned to repair portion of the government's P24-billion calamity fund to implement the two-year plan.

The Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) filed a case against the DOE, Napocor and NGCP in the Supreme Court during the elections.

In a statement, Bayan said the ensuing brownouts, if they happen again, might have an effect on the conduct of the first ever automated polls.

"We hope that the ensuing Luzon brownouts (would not be) a preview of things to come," Bayan added. With reports from Amy R. Remo and Alcuin Papa

Chip in for more GMA legacy ads, other gov't agencies urged

From page A1

love months of her term.

And the prize is always welcome to help.

Better late than never

"There's a reason that says 'better late than never.' But I think if you (media) help us, then it should be enough to please tell the people there's a legacy that this government is leaving the people," he said.

The state media agency recently ran two-page newspaper ads detailing what the administration touted to be its gains in the economy, social development, public works, law and order, job generation, agriculture, energy, environmental preservation, and digital infrastructure since 2001.

A party-list group representing pensioners and indigenous people later criticized the PIA, saying the ads hardly reflected the reality of poverty across the country.

It was also observed that the ads cited "Kanina Tayo Noon, Ngayon Tayo Ngayon (Recently, Then and Here)", contained the initials "GF" of administration standard-bearer Gilbert "Gibo" Teodoro.

Campaign material

Reached for comment yesterday, a lawyer who went to the Manila Regional Trial Court last year to question the use of public funds to advertise the programs of the President, Vice President and cabinet members also smelled at the PIA's recent efforts.

Ernesto Francisco said the "Gamit" ads, apart from using taxpayers' money, also doubled as a campaign material for Mr. Arroyo's congressional bid in the May elections, a move unprecedented in the history of the Philippine presidency.

"That's illegal disbursement of funds especially now that she's running for office. It's part of campaigning. She's using government funds and resources to promote her candidacy," Francisco said in a phone interview.

The ads, he said, were designed not only to boost her candidacy but also those of members of the ruling party Lakas-Kampi-CMD.

Francisco said he was considering filing a new case against the administration over the PIA campaign.

Countering negative news

Undaunted, the PIA said it planned to place more ads, countering the negative stories of the foreign press, which had also been marked by allegations of corruption, economic mismanagement and electoral fraud.

Limsoon stressed the need to keep the public informed on the administration's accomplishments.

"If you tell the people what we're doing, and this leads to less misunderstanding, it results are positive as the numbers that we support project are, then it should stimulate the nation to do better in these areas," he said.

Besides, the PIA chief added, the ads should "counter the negative news that seems to erase successful ones."

"If we look at the positives, which are based on numbers, and from these numbers have improved the lives of people, does maybe we can move forward as a nation," he said.

Haiti's Filipino nuncio counters critics

From page A1

our the basic infrastructures and with significant security and social problems is hugely problematic.

"Haiti imports 80 percent of its basic needs—like food. When theater struck, most of the aid had to be flown or trucked from other countries, mainly from the United States and Haiti's neighbor, the Dominican Republic. But the transportation good will and humanitarianism of all have overcome these negative factors," Auza reminded the critics.

"I have been constantly visiting relief centers, especially those managed by Catholic agencies and have attended many meetings related to aid distribution," Auza said the logistics is an insurmountable task.

"There has been evident progress in the relief efforts," he added. "As a way of encouraging aid agencies, I had jokingly suggest to relief agencies that their motto should be 'getting better every day.' It has been that way."

Auza, 51, survived the deadly Jan. 12 earthquake—an hour but said that even the earthquake, Haiti is the apostolic nuncio to Haiti when he been held to the backyard. "Masses are celebrated outside, in courtyards, halls and open fields."

At least 150,000 people are believed to have been killed in the recent earthquake. Haiti, a poor Caribbean nation which has a population of more than 10 million, is predominantly Catholic.

Native of Bohol

Auza, a native of Bohol, has been the papal envoy (the Vatican's ambassador) to Haiti since August 2006. He is one of four Filipinos now serving as apostolic nuncios in different parts of the world. He graduated at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila and the University of Saint Thomas Aquinas in Rome. He did his diplomatic formation at the Vatican Diplomatic School, Pontificia Accademia Ecclesiastica.

He worked in Madagascar, Mauritius, Bulgaria, Albania, the United Kingdom, the Vatican's Section for Relations with States and at the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations in New York.

Auza adore the deadly earthquake struck, the Filipino archbishop called his mother, Magdalena Auza, in Bohol to tell her that he was still right. In the earlier news report, Auza was quoted telling his relatives via e-mail: "I am barely standing and very exhausted." He had been very busy with relief efforts, consoling the bereaved and blessing the dead.

Not as lucky

But the archbishop of Port-au-Prince, Joseph Serge Miot and the first vice general, Msgr. Charles Benoit were not as fortunate.

"When the earthquake hit, the archbishop was in the hallway of his room on the second floor. He was in the habit of praying the rosary to the afternoon," Auza recounted.

"The violence of the tremor and the mind-striking sun of the collapsing three-story building threw him out of the balcony and into the pavement below," he said.

Miot was about to have a meeting with some church officials in finalize the assignments of seven new priests ordained by him last Dec. 20. Benoit was inside the residence. The body was found eight days later and was still intact, which seemed to indicate that he died only a short time before the family was recovered from deep under the rubble. I was told that he was holding a rosary on one hand and a host on the other."

Many seminarians died

Auza said he knew some Filipinos who were killed. "I have been in close contact with the Philippine UN contingent here since I arrived in 2006. I know many in the UN Mission who died, in particular, all five high officers."

The Port-au-Prince archbishop and the vicar were buried on Jan. 23 in front of the cathedral and Auza was busy meeting the delegations including bishops from the United States. Haiti's President Rene Preval was among the dignitaries present.

"The Holy See will certainly review the leadership of the archdiocese as soon as possible," Auza assured, "but with our realizing too much as a concrete gesture to honor local tradition and sensibilities."

He gave a long list of church buildings in Port-au-Prince that were destroyed including the major seminary where many seminarians died. "There would be around 20 seminarians and a professor still under the rubble," he lamented. "And where are we going to house the 230+ seminarians who have lost everything?"

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Archbishop Auza

HELPING HAITI Filipino Archbishop Bernardito Auza, Apostolic Nuncio to Haiti, who survived this deadly Jan. 12 earthquake (offset), has called on Filipinos to help. With a million of Bohol, has been the papal envoy to Haiti since August 2006.

PHOTO FROM CBCP WEBSITE

vices (CBCP) have been meeting regularly to coordinate efforts. "The Holy See has appointed CBCP as her lead agency," he said. "Haiti is the biggest CBCP program in the whole of the Americas. The Church's vast infrastructure on the ground and, above all, the Catholic faithful, are actively involved. Previous experiences but we always try to smooth things out."

Had this as it was, the earthquake could provide a new start for the country, Auza observed. "Surely we could not have needed such a devastating catastrophe to renew our selves. But I believe the height on silver lining in this huge disaster should be the renewed and commitment to do things better. In its governance, its institutions and in the Church."

"For instance, the disaster has revealed to the world what we in Haiti live with every day, like nonexistent basic services and infrastructure. We envisage in Haiti, including those in Church leadership positions, this is a time to be missioned to ensure more transparency and accountability, in order to restore the trust and confidence of the international community."

Auza, still less confidence, Auza stressed, if corruption and a lack of transparency would emerge in the initial phases of reconstruction and, as a result, Haiti would never recover.

Auza had earlier called on Filipinos to help. Monetary donations may be sent to Iniciativa ng Obispo ng Pilipinas (or the Philippine Bishops' Initiative Group), Account No. 2004000011, under the name of the Apostolic Nunciature to Haiti Archbishop Bernardito Auza.

Bacolod donors

Bacolod Bishop Vicente Navarra also appealed for cash donations for the victims of the Haiti earthquake. Donations may be brought to the Caritas Bacolod Office, Social Action Center at the Bishop's House in Bacolod City or they can call 433-6019.

"We are called to answer a Christian challenge posed by the latest devastation in Haiti. More than half a million people in Port-au-Prince are dead, dying, sick, hungry and homeless," Navarra said on Monday, January 25, 2010.

The bishop stated the need for everyone to pitch in to alleviate the sufferings of the people in Haiti. "A little amount will go a long way," he added.

Navarra also called for prayers for those who died and for those still suffering in Haiti so they would be able "to rise from despair with renewed hope in God and humanity." With Cecille B. Gonzalez, Inquirer Mindanao

Corus chess: So faces Israeli GM

Dy pulls off jungolf surprise

WIJK AAN ZEE, NETHERLANDS—Filipino Grandmaster Wesley So tackles dangerous Israeli GM Emil Sutovsky in the ninth round of the 72nd Corus chess tournament Group B championship here Tuesday.

The 16-year-old So will handle white against Sutovsky the 1996 World Junior champion who holds an Elo rating of 2637, just a shade better than So's 2606.

After the 32-year-old Sutovsky No. 2 seed battle four more lower-rated players in the next five days as he tries to duplicate his Group C victory in the same tournament last year.

Listed top against So are seventh seed GM Tomi Nyback of Finland in the 10th round, GM Anish Giri of the Netherlands in the 11th, GM David Howell of England in the 12th and lone female entry International Master Anna Muzychuk of Slovenia in the 13th and final round.

Through he has a lower Elo of 2580, the 15-year-old Giri should be a major threat. The Dutch champion of Nepali-Russian descent leads by 1.5 points over Ro. GM Pentala Harikrishna of India and Erwin T Amt of the Netherlands.

Giri rates 6.5 points on five wins and three draws against Sos five points on two wins and the draws, the first five occurring in the first five rounds.

JED DY PULLED OFF THE BIG SURPRISE on a day when most of the favorites emerged their clubs in their respective divisions at the start of the school season series of the ICTSI Junior Golf Classic over the weekend.

At the Riviera Sports Club course in Silang, Cavite, Dy came through with a 66 for a seven-stroke spread to Seyn Chin P 16 years and under). Bernice Olivares-Sia posted the biggest haul of 34 strokes with her 39 in girls Class E (7-9) while Philippe Wilson Palanca won on top in the boys side with his 62.

Miguel Tabuena (70-boys Class A), Raquel Zonagua (79-boys Class C), Marni Montalbo (79-girls Class A), Mikaela Aspiras (86-girls Class B) and Mia Legaspi (84-girls Class C) all emerged on top at the Tat Philippines course in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

The tournament organized by the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines marked the start of the national junior golf rankings where kids accumulate points per event which will also serve as basis for their selection to teams competing abroad.

Henin books semis ticket

Ends Petrova's Australian Open run; Roddick falls

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Former No. 1-ranked Justine Henin reached the semifinals in her Grand Slam comeback, beating No. 19 Nadia Petrova, 7-6 (3), 7-5, to take out the last seeded player in her half of the draw.

Henin, seconded and playing on a wild-card entry at Melbourne Park, next will play Wimbledon semifinalist Zheng Jie, who beat Russia's Maria Kirilenko, 6-1, 6-3, in equal but Chinese second for the lone spot on a quarter.

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RACING POST
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Air Force, Army join volley tilt

By Cedell P. Tupas

A FORMIDABLE FIELD HANDPICKED BY Imelda Evasco, the Philippine Army and Philippine Air Force are expected to join the Meycauayan City Invitational Open Volleyball Championships at the Iman Municipal Covered Court in Centro starting Feb. 7.

Iman Mayor Manny Maliksi said the tournament has already drawn 15 teams with eight playing in the men's division.

Also invited are teams from the Philippine Navy, Perpetual Help and teams from Laguna, Dasmariñas and Quezon City.

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PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo poses with members of the national powerlifting team, which produced several age-group champions last year, plus a bronze medal from Brittney Elkin (fourth from left) in the 2009 World Open Championships—the highest achievement by any Filipino powerlifter in the said competition. Also present during the ceremony held Friday at Malacañang's Music Room were (from left) team members Rosemarie Vasquez, Anita Kapitan, Martina Medina, PSC chair Harry Angping, Pagcor vice president for corporate communication Dodi King, Antonio Tagaliao and Peter Torres.

Feb. 14 is PSC 'Heart' run day

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The run, which is part of the activities lined up in celebration of the PSC's 20th anniversary, has three entries from the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine National Police, PSC, Ateneo Law School, Greenhills Running Club, Pinoy Ultra Runners, Philippine Hypertension Associations and national athletes.

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Adding flavor to the run, which coincides with the first day of the "Year of the Tiger," are fireworks display bands and dragon dances.

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By Cedell P. Tupas

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Viloria 'can rebound' from his recent defeat

BRIAN VILORIA CRUISED OUT OF THE blatant unethical Center Saturday evening after the five spectators who intended to hits declared he's out of danger.

Veteran trailer Ronnie Nathanielz, who accompanied Viloria to the hospital and received constant updates on his condition, said the boxer is in good spirits despite having his world title bout Saturday. At least, he appears to be.

Brian, his mom or his bride Bobo Nevarez, who is a nurse, said his damages. Eney Gabriano, thanked those who sent them their best wishes and prayed for him.

Because of his defeat to Carlos Tamara last Saturday, Viloria lost a golden chance for a multi-million fight against undefeated WBO champion Israel Gutierrez.

And while there are those who are suggesting that Brian should retire, others like Ronnie strongly feel that the fighter can rebound from the loss, just like Al "Bazooka" Bansil, who collapsed in similar fashion in his fight against Rafael Concepcion two years ago.

Bansil, who was comfortably ahead on points, inexplicably looked exhausted in the later rounds and eventually lost by a 10th-round knockout.

Bansil came back strong, however. Last Jan. 14, he scored a fourth-round knockout win over Jose Rios. would also challenger Cecilio Ramos of Mexico in a fight overseen marked Senior Sports' entry into big-time boxing via ABC 5.

* * *

Viloria, as an champion and young young man, is a remarkable couple. The way he answered questions during the pre-fight press conferences, he would rarely

IN HUDDLE

Bert Cebes

lose. By hand a job or a TV commentator. The guy is genuinely better than some people known who serve as TV analysts in the United States.

He might not be thinking about it, but Brian has a big penalties in a fight against Calderon. The first of the supposed four fight deal between the two boxers should have been held in Manila, with the return bout date slated in Davao City.

But that's the unpredictability of boxing—one of the reasons why it's made an exciting sport.

* * *

George Chan, top honcho of Energy Food and Drink Inc. and team owner of the PBA big-time Red Bull, holds dual citizenship with the Philippines and Canada. He was officials of Maryland Distributors Inc. were arrested and detained on Jan. 15.

Maryland Distributors Inc. is the company that took over the distributorship of Red Bull products in the country last year. Energy Food and Drink Inc. is DFDI, the previous distributors, filed a complaint against MDI, accusing it of tampering with the products labels of Red Bull Regular. DFDI said the violated food and drug laws. Penalties for this violation range from two to five years' imprisonment plus fines of from P50,000 to P200,000.

Witnesses of arrest were issued against the five MDI officials by Judge Bernabeth Cabanes of Branch 39 of the Regular Regional Trial Court.

* * *

Rumors about a romantic relationship between Manny Pacquiao and Krista Saniller are simmering again after the boxing icon left for Los Angeles last Jan. 17 to train for his fight against Joshua Clottey and Krista flew to the US a few days later.

It was too obvious, according to a friend in the show biz industry.

If indeed speculations are accurate, the tangled love lives members re-enjoy another twist to suspense.

Unless Krista pose Pacquiao a surprise visit in Los Angeles.

New PBL squads look to rookie draft today for extra muscle

By Jeanine W. Pope

SEVEN TEAMS HOPE TO WIPE themselves up into league contenders in the second PBL rookie draft today just a couple of weeks before their debut in the PG Flex GR Dorio Open Conference on Feb. 13.

Bobbitonic Phanta and Cobra Energy Drink will be joined by Excel Bowl, Agel Montserrat, Pure C, Aerol Luggedd and the returning Bestway in the season-opening tournament.

An eighth team, composed of the core of the Adamson Falcons, will also see action.

PBL executive director Butch Mariano said six-pax and late rookie application fees until 1 p.m. today to register, an hour before the draft at The Old Spaghetti House in Robinson's Pioneer.

"We will give them time to file their application," said Mariano.

Powerhouse Harbour Centre and Hapee are skipping the tournament.

Harbour Centre, which bagged its seventh straight championship last year, decided to throw its full support for the Philippine Patriots in the Asean Basketball League.

Ikeda, Ardina S. Ladies faves

Big battle looms in Iloilo

By Manong B. Castillo

GERBO BEES WILL BE GUNNING FOR REDEMPTION, AND Dottie Ardina would like nothing than a good going-away present when the 47th edition of the Southern Ladies Golf championship tees off on Feb. 4 in Iloilo.

The pulverizing Ala. Barbara batter, lined up the oldest course in Southeast Asia, will host the biggest event up there to wrest the enigma of a horrid final-round collapse in the iconic Philippine Ladies at Manila Southwoods.

Ardina, meanwhile, will fly back to the United States to resume her studies the week after tournament and wouldn't definitely regret to write up individual title.

Ikeda and Ardina, along with newly crowned HP Ladies champ Cyna Rodriguez, made up the HP team that won the team gold in the Laos Southeast Asian Games.

Rodriguez flew back to the US a day after her victory over Ikeda.

Ikeda held a three-stroke lead heading into the final round at Southwoods only to shoot a 78 and get nipped for second place by Lovelyn Gutegute.

Listing in the National Golf Association of the Philippines-regulated event ends on Jan. 30, according to NGAP ladies committee chair Elsie Arabaza. Inquiries can be routed through tel. nos. (632) 5757721, fax (632) 5706924, 09178605974.

Historic First Day Sets the Tone

By: Jesus Jimilang

The UFL is now official- ly up and running as the nation's best football clubs locked horns on Sunday, in its opening match day of the First Division. Four games in the Second Division were held as well, making for a packed and extremely entertaining day of football.

As was expected, the separation into the two divisions really increased the competitiveness of the matches, with three of the four wins registered in the day coming through one-goal margins. Kaya Digjamit was the only top flight club to manage a victory, coming from behind to dispatch of Green Archers United 4-1 at the ASCOM field in Fort Bonifacio, while the other three First Division games resulted in 0-0 draws.

If the first match day is any indication UFL fans will surely be treated to an intensely tight inaugural season, with all teams closely matched in the race for the title. Although favorites Kaya Digjamit have moved swiftly to the top of the league table, competition from the likes of Navy Raiders, Army Pilden, Manila's Eagles and recent UFL-LBC Cup winners Air Force Rider, will undoubtedly guarantee a hard and bumpy road to glory.

In the Second Division, there was abundant, with late in- stoppage-time goals proving to be the theme. 16-year-old youngster Jacob Birchmeier of Nomads Aloha Boomsports, deserves particular praise for his sweet 82nd minute strike from long range to hand his team a slim 4-3 victory.

Visit http://www.footballfederal.ph or join "LBC United Football League" on facebook to get updated info on the latest happenings in the premier football league in the Philippines.

LBC
LBC UNITED FOOTBALL LEAGUE
Kicking Into High Gear
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JAN 24, 10 UFL GAME RESULTS
1st DIVISION
Kaya Digjamit 4 1 Green Archers United Knights
Union Duty Project 0 0 Loyola ATR Kris King
Army Pilden 0 0 Air Force Rider
Navy Selecta 0 0 Manila's Eagles
2nd DIVISION
UFL 2 4
UFL 2 3
UFL 2 4
UFL 2 3
Rugby Phils
Subic Bay Football Academy
Kaya Digjamit
Green Archers United
Navy Raiders
Army Pilden
Manila's Eagles
Air Force Rider
Loyola ATR
Kris King
Union Duty Project
Nomads Aloha Boomsports
UFL
UFL
UFL

SPORTS
Editor Teddyboy S. Molondrino
Assistant Editor Rhando T.J. Gilbuio

Tigers, E-Painters fight for survival

By Marc Jayson B. Cortez

ANTIPOLO CITY—COCA-COLA COACH BO PERASOL HAS A READY answer to consumers that his Tigers are favored to make the KFC-PBA Philippine Cup quarterfinals.

That's how safe he plays things, for he's been in this pressure-packed situation before. Never mind if his squad is the hottest team in the last-summer conference.

"Are we favored against them? I don't think so," Ortega said on the eve of his Tigers' clash with the Kaya vs Shine Hapee Painters at 7 tonight at the Ynares Center.

"I would take that as a compliment if we are. But to a hoopfest game, we aren't favored."

The two wild-card survivors split their two games in the eliminations.

Guiling stipulates, however, would have to go to Bernard, who guided Ateneo to the Fiesta Cup finals two years ago.

Coca-Cola, which languished to the cellar for the early part of the eliminations, has won five of its last six games, rising to the occasion at just the right time to make the wild-card phase. The Tigers then dispatched Burger King, 119-112, three nights ago.

And Ironwoman started to get a rhythm in the tournament for the Tigers, they have managed to turn things around with that late win and finally open the door of legitimate threats.

But that doesn't mean that the Elasto Painters would be pushovers in this pressure-cooker contest. Kaya or Shine has thrown at many foes, especially Burger King as a KO but if they had a say because they know that the Tigers have the edge in size.

Art Tenorio and Dennis Espino, grinded big men who know what it takes to win, should deliver for the Tigers and Ivo Opinion for shooter Gary David to open outside.

The winner of this game will advance to a clash with Purefoods in a best-of-five quarterfinal series starting Friday. Purefoods qualified as the No. 2 team with a 12-6 record.

Alaska and San Miguel marched straight into the Final Four with identical 13-5 slates, though the Aces earned No. 1 seeding—and the right to play the winner of the quarterfinal series between the No. 4 and No. 5 teams—after defeating the Beermen twice in the eliminations.

Barangay Ginebra, the No. 4 squad, dugs it out with defending champion Talk 'N Text in the other series.

POWER: Ironwoman Mark Telan (left) overpowers Rain or Shine's tenacity veteran Jun Jacob Sumite. AUDREY ZAMORA

OLYMPIAN: Rosario Jalosjos with son Robert Miguel (left) and Rafael.

Kid pugs display classy ring craft

By Recah Trinidad

PUERTO PRINCESA—RAFAEL AND ROBERT Miguel Jalosjos delivered scoring wins for Team Misamis Oriental but their Olympian father, Roberto, said his kids will have to surpass themselves to stay alive in the National Youth Boxing championships that finished off Monday with an amazing burst of high-level skills and competitiveness in the lighter weights.

Rafael, 13, stamped Ilocos Sur's Jasper Fuentes of Marcos, 11-3, in the 38-kg. exercise weight, but he was readily outdrawn by Robert Miguel, 12, who used the veritable talent of a future international to vast tough Jeffrey Xerlie of Mandaue City, 13-3, in the 30-kg. ace weight.

"Sobra nalugang gusling ng mga bagong bata (The new kids were really superb)," mentioned Jalosjos, who competed in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics after winning the country's lone gold medal in the 1988 Seoul Games.

Jalosjos was particularly weary of tiny Rhenzo Tarrazo, chunky and classy son of a tricycle driver from Tabuelan, Cebu province, who disposed of bold boy John Dominic Rivera, 12-7, in another bout.

Tarrazo and Rafael Jalosjos could meet in the semifinals, but either of them will have to first scale the outstanding Robert Herakles of Bukidnon, who scored the lone five-day stoppage in the 30-kg class by dusting off Mindanaoguin Emmanuel Tapia Jr. in the second round of the one-minute, three-round contest.

"I left a three-time gold medalist in Mindanao," said columnist Joaquin Henson, a special guest in the festival, of Herakles.

Competition in the five-day boxfest among teens 11 to 16 years old resumed with action in the girls and women's divisions at the sparkling City Gymnasium last night.

There were also a total of 16 bouts featuring elite competition for prospective ticket to Asian championships set Monday but those were overshadowed by the classy competence of the super kids in the veteran and age divisions.

Aplus METRO
Gino Abalos S. Ulanday

DID YOU KNOW

FORMER President Corazon Aquino visited correspondent with designs "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., then a reporter for the Manila Times, after her vacation in the Philippines during her junior year in college.
Cyril C. Bonoan's Inquirer Account

NBI files charges against Ivler, mom

Road rage suspect also wanted in the US for drug offenses, says FBI

By Jeannette I. Andrade and Julie M. Aurelio

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (NBI) yesterday charged road rage suspect Jason Ivler with direct assault complex with attempted and frustrated murder in connection with the Jan. 18 raid on his mother's house in which he traded shots with NBI agents, leaving him and two agents wounded.

Also charged as an accomplice was Ivler's mother, Marlene Aguilar.

At the same time, the NBI said that Ivler was being sought by United States authorities for drug charges.

NBI Counter-Terrorism Unit chief Ike Diaz told the Inquirer that James Nixon of the Federal Bureau of Investigation had confirmed that Ivler was indicted for drug trafficking and possession of illegal drugs on Sept. 8 before a Nevada court.

A warrant for his arrest was issued after he failed to appear in court to answer the charges against him, Diaz said.

Meanwhile, the NBI has invited Ivler's stepfather, Asian Development Bank (ADB) British consultant Stephen Hobart, for questioning on Thursday about his possible involvement in hiding Ivler from lawmen out to arrest him for the death of Banana Heist Hunter Jr.

The filing of the additional charges against Ivler before the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office was announced in a press conference yesterday by NBI Director Nestor Mantaring.

On the other hand, Aguilar was charged after she allegedly aided her son in carrying out his assault on NBI agents during the Jan. 18 raid on her house in Quezon City.

Mantaring said the illegal possession of firearms charge against Ivler would be incorporated into the direct assault suit. Earlier, the NBI said the firearms seized from the suspect during the raid—an M-16 rifle and a cal. .45 pistol—were not licensed.

As for Pollard, "for now we get off the hook," the NBI chief told reporters.

NBI Special Action Unit chief Angelito Magno, who was one of the two NBI agents wounded during the raid, told the Inquirer that they wanted to question Hobart to determine if he had helped hide Ivler from the police.

"What we want to know is if he had a hand in coddling Ivler and to what extent," Magno stressed.

Ivler is set to arraigned on murder charges before Judge Alexander Balot of the Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 76 on Feb. 9.

The case is in connection with the death of Eliezle Jr. Ishio, according to witnesses, who shot by Ivler following a traffic altercation on Nov. 10.

Ivler remains confined at the Quezon Memorial Medical Center for two gunshot wounds he sustained during the NBI raid.

"The arraignment is set on Feb. 9 so he has until then to get better," a court clerk said.

The NBI earlier asked the court to order Ivler's detention in a penal institution, instead of turning him over to the barangay, since he recovers from his injuries.

Aguilar, on the other hand, will be arraigned on Feb. 18 before the Quezon City Metropolitan Trial Court Branch 31 under Judge Voltaire Agas.

Aguilar is facing a charge of obstruction of justice—of the violations of Presidential Decree 1829—for allegedly lying to authorities about her son's whereabouts to prevent his arrest.

MOONLIGHTING
A security guard spends his break giving a haircut to a man in front of his station on Annapolis Street in Greenhills, San Juan City.

Peta asks Malabon City school to call off rodeo

By Tina G. Santos

ANIMAL RIGHTS ADVOCATE People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta) Asia yesterday urged officials of a university in Malabon City to call off a rodeo event it was planning to host as part of the institution's founding anniversary celebration.

Rochelle Regudos, Peta campaigns manager, said they received report from students that Dr. La Salle Araneta University (DLSAU) was holding a rodeo competition on Thursday.

"And we were told that they have been holding such an event every year, during [the] school's foundation anniversary," she told the Inquirer.

In a Jan. 26 letter addressed to Dr. Armando Chengoa, assistant dean of the DLSAU's College of Veterinary Medicine and Agricultural Sciences, Peta urged the university to immediately cancel the event as it is harassed to hold a protest against it.

"It is sad that a prestigious university founded on Catholic values would sponsor these unfeeling and wanton suffering and would glorify such gore and violence. We urge you to cancel the event immedi-

It's easier to get a loan from us than to read this headline.
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• 250 texts to other networks
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ovi
SUN CELLULAR

THE END OF ANOTHER DAY
Children living in Smokey Mountain, Tondo, Manila, search from scrap a pile of garbage as the sun sets, denoting the day to a close. (RYAN ROSARIO)

Cops nab man accused of raping young girl he reportedly sired with daughter

By Jeannette I. Andrade

THE POLICE HAVE ARRESTED a 53-year-old man accused of raping his 10-year-old granddaughter—a child he reportedly sired with his own daughter.

Operatives of the Manila Police District's Women's and Children's Protection Desk arrested on Monday afternoon Angelito Ocampo near his home on Maceda, Sampaloc, after his grandchild filed a complaint against him.

MPD-PCPO Head Chief Insp. Rizalito Acuello said this was the third instance that Ocampo had been arrested for incestuous rape.

Ocampo was first arrested in 1998 after he allegedly raped and impregnated his 14-year-old daughter, the mother of the 10-year-old victim.

Acuello said Ocampo was released in 2004 due to the lack of a formal complaint against him when the complainant suddenly failed due to cardiac arrest.

Ocampo, however, ended up behind bars due same year after he allegedly abused his other daughter. He was again freed when the victim pursued many due to extreme depression.

"Now he is back in jail for allegedly raping his granddaughter from his own daughter," Acuello said.

The rape allegedly took place on Jan. 25 after the child was left in Ocampo's care.

The victim, however, told cops of her relatives about her ordeal. They immediately sought the help of barangay officials who called the police.

Ocampo vehemently denied the charges against him. "Mas I be already dead right now if I raped my daughter. I did not rape them. I may be a drunk but I never abused my kids," he told reporters in Filipino.

He also denied that his alleged latest victim was his child by his own daughter as he accused his relatives of concocting the rape charges against him.

He was detained at the Manila City Jail after a rape charge was filed against him before the city prosecutor's office.

Man shoots 2 sons dead, kills self

By Nancy C. Carvajal

TWO BOYS WERE SHOT DEAD by their father before he turned the gun on himself at around 3:30 a.m. yesterday in Quezon City.

PO2 Rodel Tumaneng of the Quezon City Police District's Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit identified the three as Francis Nick, 11; Reynold Pida, 13; and their father, Napoleon Abordo, 37.

Tumaneng said the boys were asleep when they were shot by their father who allegedly flew into a rage after he learned that his wife was having an affair.

Tumaneng said Abordo shot himself afterward with a 9-mm gun, an unlicensed firearm, inside his house on Samoa Street, Maligaya Park, Barangay Pasong Putik.

An investigation conducted by the police showed that Abordo had planned the killings based on a note message he had sent to a relative.

In the text message, he called almost his problems with his wife and his desire to spare his children from pain.

Police said the boys were shot in the neck as close range while Abordo shot himself in the temple.

Relatives rushed them to the Eastern University Hospital where they were declared dead on arrival.

Chief Insp. Benjamin Ebinezer, Quezon City Police District director, said he found out Abordo's and his wife, Rogelyn, had fought before he killed himself after she admitted that she was having an affair with an office mate.

Quezon City police eye permanent gun ban

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THE QUEZON CITY POLICE District (QCPD) will maintain checkpoints round-the-clock in selected areas in the city to get after people who carry firearms in violation of the nationwide gun ban imposed by the Commission on Elections.

At the same time, the QCPD said it was considering a permanent implementation of the gun ban.

"We intend to put up checkpoints in selected areas in the city because we observed that crimes committed during daytime have increased while crimes committed at nighttime have decreased," Chief Supt. Elmo San Diego, QCPD chief, said in a press conference held at Camp Karingal, the QCPD headquarters.

However, San Diego clarified that the total number of crimes have gone down since the election gun ban took effect.

He said that crime incidents have been reduced by at least 40 percent since the ban was implemented on Jan. 10.

"Based on the crime reduction rate due to the gun ban, we plan to recommend that the gun ban be institutionalized," San Diego said.

He added that a total gun ban would help them take illegal firearms off the streets.

Noting the peace conference, San Diego also shunned reports that there were intense arrest and blanket weapons seized by his men from checkpoints.

He added that many of the 25 people who were apprehended were policemen and security guards.

"The violators were temporarily released after they posted bail of P10,000, San Diego said.

QCPD director Chief Supt. Elmo San Diego shows firearms seized by his men. (NANCY CARVAJAL)

METROBRIEFS

Tiñga warns against impostors soliciting money

Makati residents, especially owners of business establishments in the city, should beware of people using the mayor's name in asking for donations, Mayor Freddie Tiñga issued the warning yesterday after he received complaints that a man had called up two companies based in the city and asked them for money. "I call on the business sector to be vigilant against anyone who would use my name or my office to ask any favor and more so, solicit funds. There is an obvious organized modus operandi using my name, all part of daily politicking made by my political opponents on the election money," Tiñga said. He explained that all transactions between the city government and the business community are done in an official and formal manner, and not through personal calls. The mayor also advised business owners to immediately report similar incidents to the city's emergency hotline 1023. According to Tiñga, on Jan. 22, a certain Amado Pineda, posing as one of his staffers, called up Del Monte Philippines president and chief executive officer Joselito Campos Jr. to ask for money, allegedly on the mayor's behalf. Fortunately, a member of Campos called up the mayor's office and learned that it was a hoax. On Jan. 19, a caller posing as the mayor also called the Mini Cooper car dealer in Global City through its marketing communications manager, Margarita Bayhay, and asked for a discount on a car that he intended to buy. Tiñga said the impostor even asked Bayhay to call her boss to give him a call. The cost of a Mini Cooper ranges from P1.6 to 3 million. Bayhay verified the call with a staffer of Mayor Tiñga and found out that the caller was indeed an impostor. Last year, Tiñga made the same warning after a person posing as the mayor's aide also attempted to solicit cash donations from five Taguig-based business establishments.

Alex Calleja

Caloocan to conduct earthquake drills in schools

THE CALOOCAN City government will soon be conducting earthquake drills in the city's schools. Following the 7.0-magnitude earthquake in Haiti, the city government ordered the rescue unit of the recently formed Department of Public Safety and Management to conduct earthquake drills starting this month. "It's most classes, we are caught unawares if we are not ready. That is why we have to conduct earthquake drills to prevent tragedies, especially in public places like schools," Caloocan Mayor Enrico Echiverri said in a statement.

Beverly T. Ramirez

DDB'S BOB SCARPELLI TO HEAD TITANIUM AND INTEGRATED JURY

CANNES LIONS 57TH INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING FESTIVAL 20-26 JUNE 2010

The elite Titanium and Integrated Jury, which awards the world's best breakthrough ideas and most outstanding integrated campaigns, will be chaired this year by Bob Scarpelli, DDB Worldwide's Chairman and Chief Creative Officer.

In his 33-year career at DDB, Bob has created some of the most iconic, talked-about and awarded creative work in the world. Under his leadership, DDB has created a large network of award-winning and innovative agencies that, based on creative output, have been named Agency of the Year in more than 25 countries.

In addition, DDB has been recognized as the top creative network by Advertising Age, Adweek, Campaign, Creativity and The Gunn Report. A strong performer at all the major awards, DDB has won the most Lions and the most Grands Prix in the history of the Cannes International Advertising Festival.

Commenting on his role, Bob said, "Attacking our clients' business issues in innovative and effective ways is critical to the future of the communications industry. We must use all the tools available to us today and invent new ones when necessary. The Titanium and Integrated Lions were created to honor that kind of breakthrough thinking. We will reaffirm that commitment in Cannes this year."

With this category now being the most exciting and important out there in the industry, Bob will be leading a mighty respected group of influential visionaries who are at the forefront of taking advertising and communications to new levels.

TITANIUM & INTEGRATED LIONS JURY MEMBERS

Bob Scarpelli, DDB Worldwide – Jury President

Susan Bonds, 72 Entertainment, USA
Jane Wonter, Mortenbrigade, Belgium
Fabio Fernandes, Fitness Search & Search, Brazil
Rob Reilly, Creativo Portal + Bogusky, USA
Per Hamnis, ARGA, USA
David Stabb, Wonderman, USA
Khai Meng Tham, Ogilvy & Mather, USA
Mark Waites, Mother, UK
Nick Worthington, Colenso BBDO, New Zealand

Apart from awarding the Titanium and Integrated Lions, this jury will also award the Grand Prix for Good, a new accolade to reward entries ineligible to win a Grand Prix in their sections because they are made for charities and public services.

You may still submit entries and register as delegates to the 57th Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival, the world's biggest celebration of creativity in communications.

For further information and to register to attend the Festival, please go to www.canneslions.com. The Philippine Daily Inquirer is the Official Country Representative of the Cannes Lions Festival. You may also direct your queries through our Corporate Affairs office at (632) 897 0808 local 208.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Official Festival Representative

NBI agents arrest 2 men for sale, proliferation of fake dollars in Pasay

By Jeannette I. Andrade

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (NBI) announced yesterday the arrest of two men allegedly involved in the sale and proliferation of counterfeit US dollars in Pasay City.

During last week's operation, agents also seized millions of pesos worth of the fake currency.

At a press conference, NBI Director Nestor Mantaring identified the two men as Sonza De Leon, 54, a resident of Sta. Rosa, Laguna; and Ernesto Puentod, 51, who lives in Bacoor, Cavite.

Over P6.4 million

When arrested by agents of the NBI National Capital Region during an entrapment operation, the two yielded 1,400 pieces of fake $100 bills worth more than P6.4 million.

Mantaring said they conducted the operation after they received information that De Leon was selling fake dollars.

An agent posing as a buyer immediately contacted De Leon and asked him for 20 bundles of $100 bills containing 100 pieces each.

After De Leon agreed to deliver the fake money on Jan. 21, the NBI agents immediately set up an entrapment operation.

At around 3 p.m. on Jan. 21, the NBI agent met with De Leon at the parking lot of the Heritage Hotel in Pasay City.

During their meeting, De Leon handed the agent a paper bag containing 14 bundles of fake dollar bills.

On the other hand, Puentod was arrested by NBI men during a follow-up operation in front of a casino at the hotel after he sold De Leon the fake dollars and was instructed to proceed to the site.

NBI DIRECTOR Nestor Mantaring shows to the media a bundle of fake $100 bills seized from two suspects last week. (JAY ALCOBA)

RSO: US Embassy got involved

The fake bills were turned over to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas while representatives of the US Embassy took some of the counterfeit dollars and forwarded them to the US secret service.

Mantaring said that De Leon and Puentod had been charged before the Pasay City prosecutor's office with violations of Section 168 of the Revised Penal Code or illegal possession and use of false treasury or bank notes and other instruments of credit.

Peta asks school to call off rodeo

From page A1 >

early," Orca said.

Regodon stressed that every national animal protection organization in the world was opposed to rodeos because of the events' inherent cruelty.

"Animals are often injured and then set free from fear and pain during rodeo events," she said.

Despite her comment, Gloseja said she believes that he had yet to see a copy of Peta's letter.

He also stressed that Peta should not have addressed the letter to him as his office was not directly involved in organizing the rodeo.

"My office is not the approving body. (Peta) should be addressing its concerns to the over-all chair of the foundation's anniversary committee which is an independent body," Gloseja said.

Huge Mayan head found suggests significant city

GUATEMALA CITY—ARCHEologists have discovered a huge Mayan sculptured head in Guatemala that suggests a little-known site in the jungle-covered Peten region may once have been a significant city.

The stone sculpture, which is 3 meters wide and 3.3 meters tall, was buried for centuries at the Chilonche ruins, close to the border with Belize.

The recent discovery of the head, which dates from the early Classic period between 300 to 600 AD, means the site is much older than previously thought. The Maya often constructed new buildings using older ones as foundations.

"It could be an imaginary being, something from the underworld, perhaps linked to a Maya deity," Polytechnic University of Valencia professor Gaspar Muñoz, part of the team of archeologists that found the head, told Reuters.

Unlike Guatemala's famous Mayan cities of Tikal and El Mirador, little restoration has been carried out at Chilonche.

Looters, looking for artifacts to sell on the black market, had dug a small tunnel passing the battered sculpture, which is similar to others discovering a solar observatory at another site, Uaxactun.

Guatemala's Peten region is home to dozens of Mayan ruins, but the largely jungle-covered area is plagued by looters, poachers and smugglers taking cocaine to Mexico. Reuters

Sri Lanka war victors vie in poll

COLOMBO—SRI LANKAN INcumbent president cited with his estranged former army chief on Tuesday in the country's first election since the two men led government troops to victory in the quarter-century war against Tamil Tiger rebels.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa and former military chief Sarath Fonseka both are considered heroes by the country's Sinhalese majority and were close partners in the campaign to defeat the rebels. But a bitter falling-out drove Fonseka to the opposition and turned Rajapaksa's expected easy re-election into a tight and bitter race.

Several explosions were heard in the predominantly ethnic Tamil town of Jaffna to coincide Sri Lanka ahead of the opening of polls at 7 a.m., and election monitor Bakiyasothy Saravanamuttu said one of three was a grenade attack on the office of a ruling party organizer.

However, a Tamil lawmaker accused the military of firing artillery shells into the area to dissuade voting among Tamils, who were expected to lean toward Fonseka.

RAJAPAKSA

FONSEKA

"I think the government wants to minimize the voting," lawmaker Suresh Premachandran said.

Military spokesperson Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara denied that the military fired any artillery.

Unidentified activists were distributing leaflets in Jaffna calling for an election boycott, Saravanamuttu said.

During the last presidential election in 2005, won by Rajapaksa, the Tamil Tigers enforced a boycott of the polls among ethnic Tamils. This year, however, Tamils were expected to vote in significant numbers.

Though close have been no reliable polls, both candidates appear to command strong Sinhalese followings, and the Tamil minority—those who suffered most from the government's offensive against the rebels—may prove to be king makers.

Polls were to close at 4 p.m., with first results not expected until Wednesday.

Whoever wins control of this island off the southern coast of India will inherit a country still deeply divided by the rebels' conflict and mired in an economic malaise. AP

US plays down Bin Laden link to bombing attempt

WASHINGTON—OSAMA BIN Laden's claim of responsibility for the Dec. 25 bombing attempt on a United States-bound airplane was a grab for "inflated glory" and not a sign he was behind the plot, a US official said on Monday.

In an audiotape aired on Al Jazeera television on Sunday a man purporting to be the fugitive al-Qaida leader praised the Nigerian man accused of the Christmas Day bomb attempt and vowed more strikes at the US.

Daniel Benjamin, the US State Department's coordinator for counterterrorism, said it was not likely that Bin Laden was directly involved.

"He's doing what for Bin Laden is a tried and true exercise, kind of associating himself with it and in that way sort of trying to get some of the inflated glory of the moment, if you can call it that," Benjamin told a news briefing.

"Bin Laden's been trying to put his fingerprints on just about everything that's happened for years, and to that regard I think we're kind of used to it." The Yemen-based regional wing of al-Qaida has said it was behind the Dec. 25 attempt to blow up the plane as it approached Detroit. The botched attack and subsequent threats to Yemen prompted Obama to declare an open war on the global militant group within its territory.

Obama has launched a series of air strikes targeting al-Qaida leaders since then and has declared that some top leaders including Qaida al-Rayed and Ayed al-Shabwani have been killed.

Al Qaida denies this. Reuters

The WORLD

Criss Lorenne B. Gasco

TOUGH BALANCING ACT
Indian soldiers form stand together on a motorcycle as they perform during the Republic Day parade in New Delhi on Tuesday. AFP

Iraq hangs Saddam's cousin 'Chemical Ali'

BAGHDAD—SADDAM HUSSEIN'S NOTORIOUS cousin and henchman "Chemical Ali" was executed on Monday just days after he was sentenced to death for the 1988 gassing of thousands of Kurds, a crime that shocked the world.

Ali Hassan al-Majid was (twice) known by his massive nickname and as the King of Spades in the pack of cards of "most wanted" Iraqis issued by the United States military in 2003, and will forever be associated with mass killings.

He was "executed by hanging until death," government spokesperson Ali al-Dabbagh said. "The execution happened without any violations, absolutely no cries of joy" in sharp contrast to Saddam's death on the gallows, he added.

State television later aired two still photographs of Majid, showing him wearing an orange and jumpsuit and the first of which clearly displayed his face.

The second picture showed him on a platform, with a black hood over his head and, with two men wearing balaclavas standing on either side.

The executions, which was welcomed by Kurdish victims, came as three massive explosions targeting Iraqis rocked central Baghdad, killing at least 36 people and wounding 71 in an apparently coordinated bid to stir unchained unrest.

Majid was sentenced to death on Jan. 17 for ordering the gassing of Kurds in the north's eastern town of Halabja which killed an estimated 5,000 people and was one of the worst crimes committed by Saddam's Iron Fisted regime.

"I was happy to see the arrest of the executioners on television," said Kamal Abdelkarim, 24, who lost his parents, five sisters and a brother in the atrocity and who continues to require medical treatment for his injuries.

MAJID

Rulled Bifar, 37, who now lives in Sulaimaniyah, the eponymous Kurdish province to which Halabja is situated, was also just a young boy at the time of the attack.

"My father and many relatives died because of Chemical Ali," he said. "I am happy that he is dead." The two pictures of the victims in Halabja, whose mutilated bodies were shown in television broadcasts to an appalled world, were museum and children to what is thought to have been the deadliest ever gas attack against civilians.

His conviction for the gas attacks, that came as the Iran-Iraq war drew to a close, was the fourth time that Majid, who was arrested in August 2003, had received a death sentence.

Handing down the ruling, Judge Abed Moamphe al-Hamid branded Majid's offenses as "deliberate murder, a crime against humanity" when the verdict was delivered amid muffled applause in the courtroom.

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki said Majid's executioners were convinced in his was "one of the secret henchmen of the former regime, who committed heinous crimes against the Iraqi people." "His name is associated with the most grievous that Iraqi land from north to south," Maliki said. "This terrible butcher finds gaps in the genocide, repression and crimes against humanity committed by Saddam and his agents." AFP

Haiti premier begs for more quake aid

PORTAU-PRINCE, HAITI—

bobbed government called for more international aid for desperate earthquake survivors still living in the rubble as donors met to draw up a recovery plan for the shattered country.

Nearly two weeks after the disaster which killed at least 150,000 people, Haitian authorities struggled to unravel fresh outbreaks of looting and the huge foreign assistance effort faced criticisms for lack of leadership.

Bulldozers cleared roaring engines from Port-au-Prince amid alarming fears of fuelling anyone alive in the debris, with the focus shifting to relief and reconstruction as donor countries held emergency talks in Montreal.

"Haiti needs the massive support of its partners in the international community in the medium and long term," Haitian Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive told world officials at the conference.

He said that before reconstruction started, the top priorities for the swelling number of people living in makeshift camps in the poorest nation in the Americas were food and water, shelter and health care.

"The Haitian government is working in precarious conditions but it can provide the leadership that people expect," he said, responding to criticisms that authorities had been almost absent from stricken affairs.

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and officials from the United Nations were among those taking part in the conference.

The UN has taken a breather role in the disaster relief effort, sending to 20,000 troops and anchoring a hospital ship off shore, while the UN is also heavily involved in relief efforts.

With the search for looted survivors officially over, one rescue team's hopes of finding another person alive 13 days after the quake were dashed when signs of life picked up by radar turned out to be a false alarm.

"We came across a body full of worms which perhaps accounts for the movements that was detected," said Samuel Berner, the head of a French rescue team.

Rescuers have saved 133 people from the debris since the 7.0-magnitude earthquake on Jan. 12, including a man who survived for 11 days on cola and snacks. AFP

'Pilot in plane crash flew opposite way'

BEIRUT—THE PILOT OF AN Ethiopian airlines plane that crashed into the sea shortly after takeoff from Beirut performed "a very fast and strange turn before disappearing from the radar," Lebanon's transportation minister said on Tuesday.

All 90 people on board were feared dead.

Transportation Minister Ghazi Aridi told The Associated Press that the pilot flew in the opposite direction than recommended by the Beirut control tower after taking off at 2:30 a.m. on Monday, during a night of lightning and heavy rain.

The tower "asked him to go over his path but he did a very fast and strange turn before disappearing completely from the radar," Aridi said.

It was not clear why the flight passed or whether it was beyond the pilot's control. Like most other airliners, the Boeing 737 also is equipped with its own onboard weather radar which the pilot may have used to avoid flying into thunderclouds.

Six survivors have been found more than 24 hours after the crash. Emergency workers have pulled bodies from the sea and the members exposed to the range from a dozen to more than 20.

Searchers were trying to find the plane's black box and flight data recorder, which are key in determining the cause of the crash.

The flight had been headed to the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.

An aviation analyst handling Ethiopian Airlines said the pilot's decision to turn back to Beirut's international airport was "shocking." He said the pilot may have been confused by the lights of the airport in poor weather conditions.

A PLASTIC coffin on Khalde beach south of Beirut in Lebanon, amidst other debris collected from the sea by soldiers and other emergency personnel, following the Ethiopian Airlines plane crash on Jan. 25. AFP

It is unclear exactly what happened in the last two minutes of flight, the official said.

Ethiopian Airlines said late Monday that the pilot had more than 20 years of experience. It did not give the pilot's name or details of other aircraft the pilot had flown. It said the recovered bodies included those of Ethiopians and Lebanese.

Martin teams and equipment sent from the United States and countries including the United States and Cyprus were helping in the search on Tuesday. AP

Iraq suicide attack kills 17, mostly police

BAGHDAD—A SUICIDE BLAST killed at least 17 people at an Interior Ministry office in Baghdad on Tuesday officials said, the latest attack to raise doubts about Iraq's ability to keep people safe weeks before a national election.

The bombing came a day after suicide bombers in vests and SUVs helped in at least two cases by gunmen with silenced weapons, attacked three Baghdad hotels, killing at least 36 people. Two of the hotels are used by western citizens and media.

An Interior Ministry official said many of those killed or injured in Tuesday's blast, in which the driver of a vehicle detonated explosives outside a forensics office, were police.

About 40 people were wounded.

Ambulances and firefighters rushed to the scene. The ministry building, which is surrounded by concrete and sheds, suffered major damage, a Reuters photographer reported.

"I've heard many explosions in the past, but nothing like this," said Hassan al-Saidi, a mechanic who works nearby. He said he saw at least five vehicles in flames and more than a dozen people wounded by flying glass.

The bombings, which shattered a seven-week lull in major assaults on government buildings and other supposedly secure targets, have stoked tensions before Iraq's March 7 parliamentary polls.

They are a blow to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, who is seeking a second term, and offer incumbent politicians who argue voters will return them for a sharp reduction in violence in Iraq over the past two years.

Maj. Gen. Qassim al-Moussawi, spokesperson for security operations in Baghdad, said before Tuesday's suicide attack that officials had tightened security after the bombings in October had formed a committee to probe insurgents' tactics and weaponry. Reuters

Burma's Suu Kyi may be released in November

RANGOON—BURMA'S (MYANmar) pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi will be freed when her house arrest ends in November, according to a government minister quoted by witnesses on Monday, but critics said that may be too late for this year's elections.

Home Minister Maj. Gen. Maung Oo told a Jan. 21 meeting of local officials the 64-year-old Nobel Peace Prize winner would be released in November, a month after many observers expect the country to hold its first parliamentary elections in two decades.

The information could not be verified independently but three people who attended the meeting said the statement was made to an audience of several hundred people in Kyaukpadaung, a town about 360 kilometers north of the former capital, Rangoon. Reuters

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BUSINESS

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Moody's raises outlook on RP banks

SUBIC Bay Metropolitan Authority administrator Armand Arreza (left) and Philippine Phils. managing director Chris Nelson inspect the site of the future Philip Morris warehouse during groundbreaking ceremonies in Subic on Monday ADAM HONG, B3

'Financially healthy throughout the crisis'

By Michelle F. Remo

MOODY'S INVESTORS SERVICE HAS RAISED ITS outlook on the banking sectors of the Philippines and 11 other countries from "negative" to "stable," citing improving domestic economies that could rebound to the stability of banks.

In a report released yesterday, Moody's said the improved outlook reflected its projection of improving credit conditions that will benefit the banking sectors.

"Outlooks for industries represent our view on the likely future direction of credit conditions in those industries," Moody's said in the report entitled "Asian Banking System Is Emerging Outlooks '12 Systems Move to Stable from Negative."

The 11 other countries whose banking sectors were given stable outlooks were Australia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia,

MOODY'S /B4

Ayala to launch microfinance mobile banking

By Doris C. Dumlao

TEAM AYALA GROUP HAS PROPOSED a mobile banking for the entrepreneurial poor in the country with the launch of a new banking unit that relies on the financial expertise of Bank of the Philippine Islands and the wireless technology of Globe Telecoms.

The new banking unit—named "BPI Globe BanKO" and nicknamed "BanKO" (which means "my bank")—aims to provide lending and deposit-taking services in Philippines who live on as low as P100 a day and have no access to formal banking channels.

"Our goal is really financial inclusion," BanKO president Dondon Tan said during the formal launch of the bank, which uses the existing license of Philippine Savings Bank, a part of Mandaluyong Bank that was acquired by BPI in 2005.

The bank's operations were designed to work in a way that the cost structure is much lower but nevertheless capable to handle small-sized transactions in high volume and at a reasonable price. As part of its strategy, it makes transactions like the use of Globe's electronic cash or G-cash technology to facilitate the movement of cash in line with its banking operations.

BanKo's main office in Greenhills is scheduled to open on Feb. 22. As the bank depends more on wireless technology, it does not see the need to put up many physical branches. At the very least, it plans to set up an office in every region in the country. To date, it is in the process of applying with banking regulators on set up branches in five priority regions.

The bank intends to lend on a wholesale basis to microfinance institutions (MFIs) and is also pilot-testing a direct retail lending framework for "unserved" micro borrowers. Unlike other MFI models that require borrowers to form cooperatives, BanKO is willing to lend directly for as long as a re-maker will back the loan.

"Our strategy is to provide innovative products and services, establish a market-oriented ecosystem and utilize alternative low-cost channels of delivery," Tan said.

For its wholesale lending to partner MFIs, the bank's single borrower's limit is about P86 million while for retail micro borrowers, the initial loan size is as low as P5,000-P15,000 in three-to-six-month cycles.

Interest rate for retail lending is set at

AYALA /B4

Currencies

January
PESO-DOLLAR RATE
P48.3993 = $1
As of 5 p.m. Jan. 26, 2010
¥90.33 = $1
As of 5 p.m. Jan. 26, 2010

Stock Market

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

(PSEi)
See stock market report on Page B2

Stocks continue to decline

Consortium to scout offshore Palawan area for oil prospects

By Asty R. Reino

THE CONSORTIUM OPERATING SERVICE Contract 53 in offshore Palawan is set to begin a seismic survey early next month to identify "drillable prospects" in the area.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Ex-

Seismic survey starts next month

change, Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Development Corp. said the consortium planned to acquire 1,000 to 2,000 square kilometers of additional 3D marine seismic data over the contract area, allowing it to determine which areas it should drill.

The seismic study, which will begin in early February, will take about 60 days to complete, the company added.

"The forthcoming survey will extend the coverage of 600 sq km. 3D seismic survey that was completed on Jan. 1, 2010," Trans-Asia said.

Trans-Asia has a 15-percent participating interest in SC 53, while the remaining 85 percent is held by Australian firm Otto Energy Ltd.

Under an agreement signed recently, oil giant BHP Billiton is expected to fund the acquisition and processing of a minimum of up to 2,000 sq km. of 3D seismic data.

In consideration, Otto Energy had also agreed to spend $5 million for a two-in-one right to review the entire seismic data base and exercise an option to farm in into SC 53.

The farm-in option will provide BHP Billiton with an "exclusive right to elect to earn a 60 percent net participating interest in SC 53 Day1 funding the drilling of two deep-water exploration wells and reimbursing [Otto's past costs."

CONSORTIUM, 2

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Stocks . . .

Area page B1

charge composite index lost another 12.26 points or 0.41 percent to close at 2,935.79 as the previous day's bargain-hunters turned into profit-takers.

The session that took the heaviest beating were mining and oil as well as the financial counter, which saw their indices tumble 2.15 percent and 1.3 percent, respectively. Only the holding firms sector bucked the downtrend, posting a modest gain of 0.27 percent.

There were 69 decliners as against 31 advancers and 67 unchanged stocks in relatively thinner volume of 972.64 billion against the daily average value turnover of about 15 billion.

Telecommunications giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. led the decliners alongside Megaworld Corp., First Gen Corp., Cyber Bay Corp., Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. and Bank of the Philippine Islands, which all succumbed to profit-taking.

Despite early intra-day gains, the stock market at the end of session was hardly perked up by the overnight rebound in U.S. stocks as Fed. Invest chairman Ben Bernanke would be reconfirmed in Federal reserve chair.

Doris C. Dumlao

Philippine Stock Exchange

Currencies

	Unit	Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	1 USD	1.000000	46.1000
Japan	Yen	100 JPY	1.081080	49.8400
United Kingdom	Pound	1 GBP	1.551000	71.5000
Hongkong	Dollar	1 HKD	0.128130	5.9100
Switzerland	Franc	1 CHF	0.967400	44.6100
Canada	Dollar	1 CAD	0.940130	43.3500
Singapore	Dollar	1 SGD	0.691000	31.8700
Australia	Dollar	1 AUD	0.867000	39.9800
Norway	Krone	100 NOK	15.5600	717.500
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	1 SAR	0.266667	12.3000
Kuwait	Dollar	1 KWD	3.417000	157.600
Indonesia	Rupiah	1 IDR	0.000107	0.0049
Thailand	Baht	1 THB	0.030000	1.3800
UAE	Dirham	1 AED	0.272200	12.5500
EU	Euro	1 EUR	1.410000	65.0400
Korea	Won	1 KRW	0.000817	0.0377
China	Yuan	1 CNY	0.146520	6.7600
Denmark	Krone	1 DKK	0.189000	8.7200
India	Rupee	1 INR	0.021700	1.0010
Malaysia	Ringgit	1 MYR	0.291400	13.4400
New Zealand	Dollar	1 NZD	0.719000	33.1600
Sweden	Krona	1 SEK	0.139000	6.4100
Taiwan	NT Dollar	1 TWD	0.031000	1.4300

Unfriendly skies

KNOWING JUST HOW already swamped from a decade-long rehabilitation plan, Philippine Airlines is once more stepping with "strong headwinds" that threaten to deplete thousands of workers and allied businesses.

However, strikes to past troubles which were caused by itself's own operations and a bloated workforce, PAL's present travails have been brought about mainly by external factors related to the global financial crisis.

So far, PAL has not approached the government for a bailout notwithstanding that its Japanese counterpart, Japan Airlines recently did (JAL would only look at the meager side of the Japanese government's financial intervention and choice).

Some parties within the Arroyo administration are now urging the government—specifically government financial institutions—to provide concessional loans to PAL to help it maintain its operations (one particular Cabinet member has been doing the rounds, convincing GFI heads to lend PAL some moolah). "No bailout," the official has been telling GFI heads. "Just cheap loans."

At the same time, PAL is also urging the government to work harder to restore the country to Category 1 status with US aviation regulators so it can use its more efficient Boeing 777s for trans-Pacific routes. It is also urging the government to "vigorously pursue the official policy of progressive liberalization of the industry" (emphasis on "progressive") during periodic air rights talks with foreign counterparts.

The alternative, according to the pro-PAL people, is a return to rehabilitation and the displacement of thousands of workers and business partners. Tough decisions ahead for the Arroyo administration, it seems.

—Boom L. Lucas

Risk free? Really!

WHILE The Asset magazine cited the Philippines for "the best sovereign bond" issue following a $1-billion (four-tranche) five-month, secured-yielded Quedancor and Rural Credit Guarantee Corp. is again on the brink of being the first government agency to not honor its financial obligations.

Totaling some P2.6 billion, Quedancor's bonds and notes issued five years ago are essentially the biggest unpaid public issues. Creditors include TV banks that bought the Quedancor paper—bonds in April and notes in December of 2005—to comply with the Agri-Agra law (which requires banks to set aside at least a quarter of their loanable funds for agricultural activities).

Quedancor's debts, ironically classified by bank regulators as bearing "zero risk," isn't a government guarantee.

Quedancor defaulted on the principal payments in April 1998 and, for almost two years, have been in talks with the national government trying to find a way out of the mess. No resolutions in sight as to now even as the debts near their maturity dates on April 7 and Dec. 20.

If Quedancor, embroiled in controversies about mismanagement and looted up before hours, fails to pay up, will it dispel the conventional wisdom that lending to the government is risk free? How will this affect other debt-reliant state firms? —Konrad Bromwich

Moving out

THEY MAY be first class when it comes to selling bonds and winning awards for the Philippine government and the likes of San Miguel Corp., but when it comes to controlling expenses, HSBC doesn't seem to mind moving "downmarket."

As part of its cost management efforts, the British banking giant will soon move out of its posh Ecto/prius Center headquarters on the corner of Ayala Avenue and Paseo de Roxas. Some units will move to HSBC's present mid-rise BPO office building in Bonifacio Global City by March this year, while some will be moved to a smaller facility in Alabang.

Sadly for the HSBC crowd, there new HQ is dwarfed by an adjacent Deutsche Bank BPO building, which is an hour more or less tall and twice as massive.

For prestige purposes, however, HSBC will retain its main branch and wealth management unit on the ground and mezzanine floors of the bank-owned building on Ayala.

What remains unsolved is whether the HSBC neon signboard at the top of Tower 1—which the bank got for signing up as Manila's anchor tenant a decade ago—will remain.

—Boom L. Lucas

'Hurry' to 'sweep'

WHILE the stock market was dragging last week, employees of this Ortigas-based brokerage house were also "dragging" last week due to an unfortunate incident of food poisoning that knocked down 70 percent of its more-than 300-employees.

The culprit was believed to be either the fish or salad that the company served to some workers' reunion during one officer's end-morning birthday bash. The president of the stock brokerage was among the few who emerged unscathed as he touched neither the fish nor the salad. But many of his executives were not so lucky. Some had to leave immediately for medical emergencies after what should have been a normal feast. About 30 to 40 percent of the affected staff were rendered immobile and some were unable to report back to work for at least two days. Despite the mishap, however, whatever was left of the unhurried staff managed to keep the office open for business.

The cancer—ironically, a regular supplier of this office—has promised to compensate employees for the woes, offering to pay for all the medical expenses of staffers who can-

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Business group pushes RP accession to Kyoto Convention

By Abigail L. Ho

THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF Commerce is urging the Philippines to accede to the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC), which outlines modern global customs procedures, to help it attract more foreign investors.

"The United States Council for International Business (USCIB) indicts that countries that fail to keep pace with world class standards for customs administrations, such as those promulgated by the World Customs Organization and the World Trade Organization, will find it increasingly difficult to attract new business, trade and foreign investment, as business cannot afford high logistics cost imposed by customs inefficiencies," the group said yesterday in a statement.

The Revised Kyoto Convention is a free countries that implement reforms set by the RKC standards would experience significant economic gains in terms of increased foreign investment and expanded trade," it added.

According to the PCCI, the RKC gives predictability and efficiency in global commerce, it promotes trade facilitation and effective controls through legal procedures that enable the application of simple but efficient customs techniques.

The RKC's key principles include transparency and predictability of customs actions, standardization and simplification of goods declaration and other supporting documents, maximum use of information technology, minimum necessary customs control, use of risk management and audit-based controls, coordinated intervention with border agencies, and partnership with trade.

Citing data from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Amchan said accession to the RKC had helped some countries not only streamline their customs procedures, but also boost their foreign direct investment inflows.

In the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, only Malaysia and Vietnam are contracting parties to the RKC.

Since their accession in 2008, Amchan noted some improvements in their trade. According to the World Bank's 2009 Ease of trading across barriers, Malaysia got the 20th slot, while the Philippines occupied the 68th position.

"We expect improvements in FDI inflow to Malaysia and Vietnam as a result of more efficient customs administration," Amchan said. "We hope the Philippines will be the third Asean contracting party to the RKC, to enable it to reap the benefits of customs modernization, not only for the country's business, but also for all Philippine importers and exporters who are the backbone of the Philippine economy."

Import bill up 4.1% in November

11-month figure still 26.8% lower than the $53.4 billion in 2008

By Bernie W. Dominguez

THE COUNTRY'S IMPORT BILL rose by 4.1 percent year-on-year in November to $3.626 billion, picking up for the first time after 13 months of decline mainly due to the slowdown in the outbound shipments of electronics products.

National Statistics Office data on imports showed that the value of inbound cargoes in November improved from the year-on-year drag of 36.8 percent in October.

The November import bill, however, was down by 4.8 percent from $3.808 billion in October last year.

For the first 11 months, the import bill reached $39.112 billion or 26.8 percent less than the same period of $53.440 billion.

Based on the NSO's latest report on external trade, the total trade of goods for the 11 months period dropped by 23.8 percent to $76.136 billion from $99.886 billion a year ago.

From January to November, the country posted a trade deficit of $4.06 billion, improving from the $7.043 billion trade gap registered in the same period in 2008.

In November alone, total trade rose by 4.9 percent to $7.338 billion from $6.996 billion in the same month a year ago. During the month, the country registered a trade surplus of $96 million, better than the $28 million posted in the same month of 2008.

A rise in imports is considered a positive development because it indicates a similar movement in local manufacturing and exports, especially for the Philippines which relies heavily on imported electronic inputs for its biggest source of export revenue.

NSO data show that electronic products accounted for 53.6 percent of total exports in November, falling by 5.2 percent to $1.219 billion year-on-year mainly due to a 30.6-percent decrease in the shipments of semiconductor devices and parts.

The operation of stateless electronic devices such as computers, cellular phones, transistors, diodes and integrated circuits manufacturing companies depends on semiconductor materials. Silicon is widely used in the production of commercial semiconductors.

Thermionic inputs in November dropped by 14.8 percent month-on-month from $1.434 billion in October.

The shipments of mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials—which represented the second biggest subgroup in terms of value—grew by 48.6 percent to $794.23 million.

NATIONAL Price Coordinating Council (NPCC) co-chair Vice President Noli de Castro (center), co-chair Trade Secretary Peter Favila and Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap discuss the movements in the prices of goods with manufacturers and retailers during the NPCC meeting held at the Board of Investments on Jan. 21. Favila said the trade department would ask retailers to bring to court unscrupulous persons who would manipulate their goods and violate the government's suggested retail prices on basic and prime commodities.

Clark airport expansion to force Subic airport closure

THE ONGOING EXPANSION OF THE Clark International Airport in Clark may prompt the conversion of the Subic Bay International Airport into a logistics and commercial area, according to the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

SBMA Administrator Armand Arreza said the agency was currently studying the possibility of permanently closing the airport and using it for other purposes.

However, no final decision had been made on this.

"We're looking at the conversion of the airport into a logistics and commercial area. With the developments at Clark, maintaining an airport at the Subic Freeport will not be feasible," Arreza told reporters.

He explained that for an airport the size of SBIA to at least break even, it needed to have 12-15 flights a day.

"With the expansion of the Clark airport, it's hard to imagine the Subic airport breaking even. It takes around P250 million a year to maintain the airport—P200 million for debt service and P50 million to P100 million for operation expenses," he said.

"When FedEx was still there, we were breaking even. Without FedEx, we are now losing money."

US delivery giant Federal Express said today as its Asian hub for 16 years. However, it closed the Subic operations and transferred its cargo facilities to the Philippine Clark Freeport Zone.

About 800 direct and indirect workers lost their jobs due to the closure of FedEx in Subic.

The SBMA also has some P150 million to annual revenues from leased airport facilities and duty-aircraft landing fees.

Arreza said that even if there was no final decision yet on what to do with the airport, a number of investors had already expressed interest in how the area could be developed.

"The good reality is we eventually shake Clark the country's main airport. Subic could still be a subsidiary airport, but we're not discussing about what to do with this airport," he said.

The total area of Clark's SBMA, at some 2,300 hectares, is around three times the size of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Metro Manila.

Only a third of the total area is being utilized by the existing operations left by the United States Air Force, are long and big enough to accommodate wide-body aircraft.

The first phase of its expansion involved the construction of a P3.50-million passenger terminal that boasted annual capacity from 300,000 to two million passengers.

Earnalin Enterprises Co. has been proposed to develop the SBMA for $1.2 billion.

Abigail L. Ho

Subic pins hope for growth on domestic tourism

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—LOCAL businessmen and top freeport officials are counting on the tourism sector to boost revenue and ensure growth in this business hub amid the global economic downturn.

Despite the bleak prospects due to the crisis and the decline of calamities in the area, Subic Bay Freeport's economy of Subic and its surrounding communities in Zambales and Bataan has been buoyed by a steady influx of mostly local travelers, said SBMA Administrator Armand Arreza.

"I think the country as a major tourist destination for locals. This has resulted in giving (businesses in the freeport) tremendous opportunities for growth. We will capitalize on that," he said.

He said major tourism-related projects in the pipeline this year were the $175-million leisure facility in Subic's Camayan area that would be undertaken by Subic Seaview Corp., a Bataan-based consortium; the Dream 9 casino and hotel complex by Philfast Shores, and Ayala Land's $23.4-million retail and commercial center here.

"Ayala Land's entry as an investor in Subic is especially welcome. We have wanted anyone in pushing the boundaries of the freeport," said Olongapo City—with a commercial center and manufacturing facilities in Bataan. The challenge for us is to make these communities as part of the freeport zone," Arreza said.

Arreza said the head of the consortium arrow acting as Subic's growth driver would continue and become stronger in the coming years.

However, he said growth in the manufacturing and logistics sectors had been flat. "There has been low demand in Europe for electronic devices and computer hardware manufactured here. Fortunately, there have been no massive layoffs. But there has also been no expansion in these sectors," he said.

He said these sectors were linked and would likely continue to be so until the global economy has normalized. "When manufacturing companies do not get orders for their products, there is nothing to transport, nothing to deliver, and no revenues to be generated," he said.

Arreza said even the Bureau dispatching giant Bardin, the single biggest investor and employer in the area, had been affected by the same drop in orders for Subic-made products from overseas.

"They have put their expansion plans on hold although growth is still stable this year and the next. They are protected by the long delivery schedules in the shipbuilding industry. Their order books are full until 2011... with 17 committed orders for ships," he said. Robert Gonzaga, Inquirer Central Luzon

Moody's raises outlook on RP banks

From page B1

India, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Taiwan, and Thailand.

The credit rating agency cited three main reasons for the upgraded outlook: improving economic prospects and stabilizing global conditions, improving access to international debt and money markets, and adequate resiliency of banks to cope with restraining macro-and micro-economic risks, having suffered only limited damage during the past 20 months of the financial crisis.

In the case of the Philippines, Moody's said the likely increase in domestic consumption, boosted by rising remittances, would benefit the banking sector.

Higher consumption prompts businesses to increase production and invest, an activity that also spurs bank lending. Increased demand for loans may also push interest rates up, boosting the profitability of banks.

Moody's expects the Philippine economy to grow 3 percent this year, faster than its projected rate per cent expansion in the 2009.

Some "political noise" could emerge as an election year, but is not expected to cause excessive instability," Moody's said.

The credit rating firm gave a "negative" outlook on the Philippines only last year, citing the likely adverse effects of an economic slowdown on the country's banking system.

Moody's, however, said that banks in the Philippines managed to remain financially healthy throughout the crisis.

The decision of Moody's to change its outlook on the Philippine banking sector reinforced confidence in the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas that local banks were less affected by the global turmoil than its counterparts abroad.

Biz Buzz

From page B1

resulted to land poisoning. As it is, managing trash market risk is difficult enough without having to contend with food poisoning risk. Doris C. Bumatay

First came, first served

SO AVONDEN Ayala Land Inc. officials are walking on air. Last weekend, sales of Park Terraces, the latest offering of top-tier Makati residential mall—the Ayala Center, Glorietta shopping mall, by a whopping 95.5 billion. And to think, the project hasn't even been formally launched yet (that will happen only tomorrow).

Of the about 700 units on the table—costing between P5 million and P40 million—only 92 are left. But there are already buyers for those if the check reservations of P50,000 each are any indication.

Officials claim that more than 400 letters of intent have been submitted to Ayala Land, exceeding the 370-unit on offer.

To determine who gets what unit, the real estate unit of Ayala Corp. had the lessees interviewed so they will know to the second who received. Time Aryee Dimilao

Manila Mining's 50th

TYCOON Felipe Yap's Manila Mining Corp. yesterday celebrated its 50th year of being a publicly listed firm, preceding even the unification of the Manila and Makati bourses into what we now know as the Philippine Stock Exchange. The question is: What's in the store for Manila Mining, which is in the thick of negotiations with the First Pacific group of Hong Kong, after the golden jubilee?

The next 50 years will likely be a new era marked by a changing of the guard. Around the bourse, it is the general view that Manila Mining—rather than Lepanto Consolidated Mining—which may be gobbled up by First Pacific first. After all, it has the strategic assets desirable to Philex Mining Corp. A 20-per-cent stake in the giant gold mine is nearly a "done deal," which would be a stepping stone for a more substantial stake later on. Remember: First Pacific also first bought into Philex with an initial 20 percent stake in October 2008. Boots C. Bumatay

Ayala to launch microfinance mobile banking

From page B1

about 3 percent a month, comparable with the commercial rate on unsecured credit card lending. The wholesale lending to MFIs will carry regular corporate rates of around 8-9 percent a year.

But providing deposit-taking services to help the clients grow is just as important, Tan said, citing studies showing that there are of four microfinance clients need savings more than loan facilities.

For the MFIs, the wireless technology harnessed by the new banking model reflects a basic lending platform that requires no additional capital expenditures as well as a much reduced loan processing and collection cost, said Ayala Foundation Inc. (AFI) director Rizza Mantuegco Zalla, who is also the president of 6-Hichange Inc., the Globe Telecom subsidiary running the m-cash services.

Capacity-building programs are also made available to MFIs through a partnership with Ateneo de Manila University.

BPI and Globe Telecom own 40 percent each of IlinkEI while Ayala Corp. has the remaining 20 percent. The bank has an authorized capitalization of P500 million, of which P200 million was paid up.

Consortium to scout offshore Palawan . . .

From page B1

According to the agreement, BHP Billiton could also become the operator should it choose to elect to farm in to SC 55.

"If BHP Billiton does not elect the first deep-water exploration well, then if BHP Billiton will transfer 30 percent interest and operatorship of SC 55 to Otto Energy," Otto Energy said.

Should BHP choose to pursue the farm-in option, Otto Energy's stake in the service contract would go down to only 15 percent from the current 45 percent.

SC 55 covers a total area of 9,000 sq. km. The Monsoon prospect, part of SC 55, is undercommercial assessment 1.6 million stake first of gas and 567 million barrels of oil.

DBP to build 'green' office/residential tower in Fort Boni

By Dianne L. Lucas

EDSA-SLEX DEVELOPMENT Bank of the Philippines (DBP) will build a mixed-use office and residential tower in Taguig City after completing an equity-for-asset swap with the developers of the Bonifacio Global City.

Counselhousing Inc. for the building—envisioned to be a 54-story tower—will commence later this year, with the aim to be initially occupied by a temporary two-floor structure that will house the bank's branch office, according to DBP president Bey David.

"We plan to make it a 'green' building," he said in an interview. "It will utilize green architecture, including solar power harvesting, a modern roof that will reduce heat gain, a storm drainage system for additional water supply, natural light, integrated walls for heat buffers, and water conservation features."

Of the 54 floors, 70 percent will be allocated for office space while the remaining 30 percent will be for residential and commercial use.

David said that the government Financial Institutions will retain its headquarter at its present Makati City location, although some DBP units and subsidiaries would eventually be transferred to the new site located near the newly opened St. Luke's Hospital and the Shangri-La Hotel, which is under construction.

Designed by architect Felino Palafox Jr., the building will rise on a 1,700-square-meter property which DBP acquired in exchange for its shares in the defunct Bonifacio Land Corp.

BLC was formed after Metro Pacific Investments Corp. won the right to develop the Former Army base in the late 1990s.

David said that BLC was unable to pay for loans it took out from DBP, and reached these with a caution on page arrangement where the state bank becomes a minority owner of the firm.

Two years ago, David initiated talks with Bonifacio Development Corp. of the Campos family and Ayala Land Inc. "In consultation DBP's equity stake in [a land] asset."

"So by adding some cash, we were able to acquire this property, which is located in a prime part of the development," he said.

The DBP chief declined to reveal the cost of the building, however, or the value of DBP's Fort Bonifacio project pending the conclusion of negotiations with potential investors.

Neda seeking support for '21st century industries'

Competitiveness-enhancing measures needed

By Roncel W. Domingo

THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND Development Authority yesterday called on Congress to pass measures that would encourage the development of the so-called "21st century industries," which may help enhance the country's competitiveness and drive growth of the economy.

These include the cultivation of high-value crops and marine products, renewable energy, shipbuilding, tourism, business process outsourcing (BPO), information and communications technology (ICT) and mining.

Deputy Gov. Adrian Cristobal of Neda's national planning and policy staff, said these industries should be included in a Congress' legislative agenda.

Such "industries use the country's natural resources and human talents that are either untapped or need further development through government support," Adrian said.

"The most important thing is that new jobs are created by these industries," he said.

Jarrayo added that farmers should shift from pure rice cultivation to high-value agriculture, like palay oil, fruits, lechon and halal livestock industry.

"Rice farming is a poverty trap because of its low yield," he said. We should give farmers the production and put farmers to work in high-value agribusiness."

Also, citing a Stanford University research, the Neda director says more than half of the world's fish consumption now comes from aquaculture, or the cultivation of aquatic organisms under controlled conditions.

As for renewable energy, Arroyo stressed that the Philippines already ranks seventh in the world in terms of the number of projects under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) spelled out in the Kyoto Protocol—an international pact to reduce greenhouse gases.

The CDM is an arrangement that allows industrialized countries to invest in foreign ventures that reduce emissions in developing countries.

Most CDM projects in the Philippines develop indigenous energy sources, such as wind, hydro and biomass.

"Companies could invest in poorer countries that could add to the country's capacity," he said, adding that investors "could take advantage of the tax incentives granted to CDM projects."

In shipbuilding, Arroyo cited the thriving industry in Cebu that had been exporting vessels to South Korea and Japan. Cebu Shipyard Engineering Industries Corp. had poured into its Philippine shipyard, so far totaling $1.7 billion.

On tourism, BPO, ICT and mining, Arroyo said these sectors employ millions of workers and have contributed considerable market shares in these sectors.

PNB PARTNERS WITH BROKER COMPANIES: The Philippine National Bank – Special Assets Management Sector (SAMS) has entered into an Auction Partnership Agreement with The Property Forum Phils. This agreement grants Property Forum the opportunity to conduct special public auctions on the Bank's wide array of foreclosed assets. It poses a very good synergy with PNB and broker companies in the disposal of foreclosed assets as Property Forum uses its nationwide network of "area partners" who readily assist clients in site inspections up to closing of the sale. This partnership serves as another mode of asset disposal for the Bank, augmenting its existing in-house auctions and aggressive sales activities.

In the photo: (from left) SVP Christian Jerome D. Bolden, PNB-SAMS Strategic Business Group Head; SVP Emmanuel Gorman V. Plan II, PNB-SAMS Sector Head; Ms. Manuel M. Abeja, The Property Forum Phils. Managing Director; AVP Janette T. Abad Santos, PNB-SAMS Marketing Division Head.

Shell-BOC tax row worries business

By Aziz S. Barua

THE PHILIPPINE CHAMBER OF Commerce and Industry has expressed alarm over the "unpredictable changes" in policies that affect business operations in the country, referring to the tax row between oil giant Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and the Bureau of Customs (BOC).

This was sounded off by PCCI chair Jesus S. Ortiz-Luis Jr., following the reversal by the Bureau of Internal Revenue of a previous ruling that exempted from excise taxes the importation of raw materials in the case of Shell, the products involved were catalytic reduced gasoline (CCG) and light catalytic cracked gasoline (LCCG).

"We leave the settling of the claims and counterclaims on what Shell owes the government to the courts. What matters the business sector is when a new policy that replaces an old one is made to take effect retroactively," Ortiz-Luis said in a statement.

Shell and the BOC are in disagreement over the tax assessments on Shell's CCG and LCCG imports. The BOC says Shell failed to settle P45 billion worth of the oil firm's imports if the back taxes were not paid.

Shell earlier warned that the confiscation of its CCG and LCCG imports could lead to the closure of the Tabangao oil refinery and its more than 900 retail dealers and stations, resulting in the loss of thousands of jobs.

Ortiz-Luis, who is also the president of the Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc., said the PCCI cut and foreign investors wanted to put their capital in places where the rules were kept consistent, not subject to frequent changes that would derail new projects and undermine their viability.

"Businesses make plans based on existing policies, so you don't change the rules midstream," he said.

Ortiz-Luis said his organization never see questioning the BOC's power to impose taxes on legitimate businessmen.

Business, he said, was alarmed by moves to implement a new tax policy retroactively.

"It is a dangerous precedent that violates the principles of law and policy-making anywhere," he stressed. "It is bound to scare the few potential investors our yet turned off by other negative news about the country."

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
PUBLIC ACCESS Building, 2600 Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for alien Employment Permits:

Name and address of Company/ Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

BUSINESS

Australia expects entry of more Filipino workers as economy recovers

By Michelle V. Remo

MORE FILIPINOS ARE EXPECTED to find work in Australia as the continent recovers from the global crisis and implements the recent Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement.

"There are already 200,000 Filipinos who call Australia their home... We expect more, especially with the FTA and the growing economy of Australia," Rod Smith, Australian ambassador to the Philippines, said in remarks Tuesday evening in a reception held at the official residence of the ambassador in Makati City.

Smith said Australia was one of the leading destinations of migrant Filipinos. On the other hand, the Philippines is Australia's biggest source of foreign workers in Southeast Asia.

He said the number of seven-year Filipino workers in Australia will easily rise as businesses take advantage of the FTA, which took effect at the beginning of the year.

The agreement liberalized trade and movement of people within member-countries.

Australia, he said, needs more skilled workers, especially in the fields of information technology, manufacturing and health care.

Smith said that besides mobility of workers, increased trade was expected starting this year with the implementation of the FTA.

Data from the Australian Embassy showed that two-way trade between the Philippines and Australia amounted to A$2.3 billion in 2008.

Major Philippine exports to Australia include crude petroleum, batteries and electric accumulators, copper, and telecommunication equipment. On the other hand, key imports from Australia are copper ore and concentrates, milk as well as crude and refined petroleum.

Manufacturing output rises

By Bernie W. Dumlao

THE VALUE AND VOLUME OF manufacturing output in November 2009 increased by 2.5 percent and 6.1 percent, respectively, after 12 straight months of decline, according to the National Statistics Office.

Results from the NSO's latest monthly integrated survey of selected industries (Misid)—which covers 210 establishments—show that the improvement in output value was due mainly to the increase in the production of petroleum products.

Output from the domestic petroleum industry rose by 43.9 percent, a turnaround from a decline of 11.1 percent in October 2009.

Two-digit increases were also observed in miscellaneous manufactures, tobacco products, non-metallic mineral products, basic metal, and rubber and plastic products.

On the other hand, the biggest reduction in output value was still seen in leather products at 37.3 percent.

Double-digit reductions in value were also observed in beverages, furniture and fixtures, footwear and wearing apparel, and fabricated metal products.

In terms of volume, growth was driven by the output of miscellaneous manufactures, which rose by 36.7 percent, compared to a growth of just 24.5 percent in October 2009.

Two-digit increases were also observed in electrical machinery, petroleum, basic metals, non-metallic minerals, transport equipment, tobacco, and rubber and plastic products.

On the other hand, the biggest reduction in output volume continued to be seen in leather products at 37.3 percent.

Double-digit reductions in value were also observed in beverages, footwear and wearing apparel, and metal and wood products.

Corn farmers buck entry of tax-free wheat

By Nina T. Clidoro

THE PHILIPPINE MAIZE FEDERATION (Philmaize) is adamant that the proposed retain of zero tariff imposition of wheat should not include feed wheat, as the latter will take away demand for local corn among animal feed manufacturers.

Philmaize president Roger Navarro said yesterday that while the government has yet to issue an order regarding wheat imports, he expressed hope that the policy would have no adverse impact on corn.

In November 2008, EO 765 scrapped the tariff on wheat for six months in a bid to halt the escalation in bread prices.

But since feed wheat was also exempted by the EO, the policy resulted in huge feed wheat imports that lowered demand for corn.

Philmaize said that any influx of cheap feed wheat will only depress corn sales and thus discourage planting. This will eventually lead to low corn production and high corn prices.

Flour millers, meanwhile, said the proposed order for duty-free wheat imports only covers feed grade wheat—also called milling wheat—which is used in making bread.

MOTORING

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Editor Joey N. Arruiz

Grey anatomy: A risky affair

Why locally sold cars are still better than grey-market options

By Botch Santos
Contributor

YOU'VE HEARD THE ARGUMENT almost why buying grey, especially second-hand, concerned imports is dangerous to you, the other roadside users and is damaging to the local economy. Well, even brand new cars, imported through grey means can pose a problem for you. Here are some technical but very practical reasons to consider.

Fuel and ECU compatibility

Locally sold cars, especially high-end models have their engine control units (ECU) tuned to match local conditions. Humidity, weather and especially fuel quality are key factors. I once test-drove a US Market (new MINI Cooper S and it felt really, really slow, far less than the advertised 170+ hp rating. A few months after, I drove an official import MINI Cooper S and the difference was night and day. A call to British trained mechanics confirmed my hunch: the US spec cars all go into limp-mode after a few weeks of driving with our local gas because the ECU senses the poor quality fuel and rounds boost and ignition timing, thrown in more fuel to give better fuel management of the combustion process and eventually ensure a partial shutdown of the engine's performance to help protect and preserve the engine until it can receive immediate attention. The local MINIs are tuned to match our poor quality fuel and thus deliver the expected performance. To verify the problem, that US Market MINI owner spent over 2 hundred thousand pesos to change all the sensors and have his ECU re-flashed or programmed to take into account our poorer quality fuel.

This problem isn't confined to the MINI brand. Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Honda, Audi all suffer from similar problems.

Even worse are the diesel engine options from Mercedes Benz. A German expert based at a media briefing a few years back that our diesel was simply unfit for use in their diesel engines. Judging by the number of grey-market ML (late 163's) that are constantly having problems in various independent automotive repair shops in Metro Manila, this comes as no surprise.

Tire choice and selection

On a trip to Germany not too long ago, I had the opportunity to ride the Porsche seven seating facility in the outskirts of Zuffenhausen, Stuttgart. There was a plethora of Porsche sportscars for testing and the test driver noted that they go through tires very quickly in the process. I checked the tire model and remembered it, since I was impressed by its performance. When I got back to the Philippines and visited the PGA Cars Porsche showroom, I decided to check all the cars on display and sure that many of those cars were fitted with the same tire model as the ones I saw in Germany. I quickly asked the technical people present and they told me that certain tire ride too harsh for our poor roads and don't last long given the heat and humidity plus the amount of rainwater we get during the wet season makes these tires dangerous should you be driving them in the rain. There are few in Europe where they have smooth roads and little rain but are not ideal here. You don't want to be changing P125,000 rear tire (each) every year or worse, lose control in the rain.

Cooling system woes and air-conditioning issues

Cars have what are known as heat exchangers, i.e., components designed to cool down fluids or gasses to help stabilize the temperature of your engine, transmission and air-conditioning system. Unfortunately those heat exchangers are heavy and expensive, hence the manufacturers' trend in design the smallest heat exchangers that can maintain its cooling efficiency in specific markets or more precisely, road and weather conditions. The greater the capacity or ability to shed heat, the greater its fine-tuned mass.

In the Arab and Asian regions, cars used in much thermal mass in their heat exchangers to be able to withstand the heat and viscosity, constant idling in bumper-to-bumper traffic with the a/c at full blast.

In cooler climes, heat exchanger components tend to be smaller since there is no need for cooling systems in well-tuned super high-ambient air temperatures nor supercross loads, and they have far less traffic to contend with. Additionally, people in Europe and the northern states of America tend to use the air-conditioning system sparingly because it is cold enough to just roll down the windows and allow fresh air to cool the car's cabin. Hence the cooling system is even far less burdened.

As a/c condenser is the heat exchanger of your a/c system. It is placed in front of the radiator. By design this isn't good because it blocks airflow to the radiator and can/can almost double the operating temperature of the engine's radiator. But due to space limitations, it has become the industry norm to mount it ahead of the radiator because the condenser also needs airflow to cool itself and shall do air for the a/c. If the condenser is small, the pressurized air it is cooling for your a/c exceeds its parameters and is unable to cool down. A/c mechanics call this phenomenon high pressure. You get hot air out of your a/c. Worse, it heats up the condenser beyond its operating temperature, thereby heat-soaking the radiator, making it unsuited to own operating temperature. End result is over-heating in traffic.

Lastly, in automatic transmission equipped cars, the automatic transmission fluid or ATF requires its own heat exchanger. Some imported cars, especially those from Japan have undersized heat exchangers or simply rely on an ATF passage line through the radiator to help cool down the ATF. Locally sold cars

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INQUIRER Compiled by Charles E. Bahar

Car Buyer's Guide

Make/Model	Price	Seat	Displacement (liters) Configuration	Displacement (liters)	Torque (lbs) Transmission	Drive layout	Safety records What's update
Luxury Compact Sedan							
Mercedes-Benz C-Class (A/T)	P3.5MM	five	1.8L inline4	184	184 5-speed	RWD	
Audi A4 2.0 T (S-tronic/Multitronic)	P3.5MM	five	2.0L inline4	147	221 8-speed	FWD	
Jaguar X-Type 2.0 DE (Luxury) (A/T)	P3.5MM	five	2.0L I4	148	151 6-speed	FWD	
Jaguar X-Type 2.5 V6 SE (A/T)	P3.5MM	five	2.5L V6	168	177 6-speed	FWD	
Jaguar X-Type 3.0 V6 SE (A/T)	P3.5MM	five	3.0L V6	201	207 6-speed	FWD	
Jaguar X-Type 2.0 D SE (turbo diesel) (M/T)	P3.5MM	five	2.0L I4	129	236 6-speed	FWD	
Jaguar X-Type 2.0 D SE (turbo diesel) (A/T)	P3.5MM	five	2.0L I4	129	236 6-speed	FWD	
Audi A4 2.0 T (S-tronic/Multitronic)	P3.5MM	five	2.0L I4	147	221 8-speed	FWD	
Mercedes-Benz C-Class (A/T)	P3.5MM	five	1.8L I4	184	184 5-speed	RWD	
Mercedes-Benz C-Class (A/T)	P3.5MM	five	3.0L V6	228	221 7-speed	RWD	
Saab 9-3	P3.5MM	five	2.0L I4	122	258 6-speed	FWD	
Mercedes-Benz C-Class (A/T)	P3.5MM	five	3.0L V6	228	221 7-speed	RWD	
Mercedes-Benz C-Class (A/T)	P3.5MM	five	3.0L V6	228	221 7-speed	RWD	
Saab 9-3	P3.5MM	five	2.0L I4	122	258 6-speed	FWD	
Mid-size Sedan							
Toyota Corolla Altis 1.6V (A/T)	P758,000	five	1.6L inline4	103	106 4-speed	RWD	
Ford Focus 1.8 Duratec (M/T)	P758,000	five	1.8L inline4	125	116 5-speed	RWD	
Toyota Corolla Altis 1.6V (M/T)	P758,000	five	1.6L inline4	103	106 5-speed	RWD	
Honda Civic 1.8V (M/T)	P758,000	five	1.8L inline4	125	125 5-speed	RWD	
Honda Civic 1.8 Exi (A/T)	P758,000	five	1.8L inline4	125	125 5-speed	RWD	
Honda Civic 1.8 Exi (M/T)	P758,000	five	1.8L inline4	125	125 5-speed	RWD	
Mitsubishi Lancer Exceed (M/T)	P758,000	five	2.0L inline4	122	136 5-speed	RWD	
Toyota Corolla Altis 1.6 S (A/T)	P825,000	five	1.8L inline4	125	125 5-speed	RWD	
Toyota Corolla Altis 1.6 S Premium (A/T)	P858,000	five	1.8L inline4	125	125 5-speed	RWD	
Honda Civic 1.8 S (A/T)	P858,000	five	1.8L inline4	125	125 5-speed	RWD	
Honda Civic 1.8 S (M/T)	P858,000	five	1.8L inline4	125	125 5-speed	RWD	
Mitsubishi Lancer GLS (A/T)	P858,000	five	2.0L inline4	122	136 5-speed	RWD	
Toyota Corolla Altis 1.6 V (A/T)	P1.138	five	1.8L inline4	125	125 5-speed	RWD	
Toyota Corolla Altis 1.6 V Premium (A/T)	P1.238	five	1.8L inline4	125	125 5-speed	RWD	
Mitsubishi Lancer GLS (A/T)	P1.188	five	2.0L inline4	122	136 5-speed	RWD	
Mitsubishi Lancer GLS (A/T)	P1.238	five	2.0L inline4	122	136 5-speed	RWD	
Performance-oriented Mid-size Sedan							
Subaru Impreza Sedan (CVT/M/T)	P1.238M	five	2.0L Fuel	230	230 4-speed	AWD	
Mitsubishi Lancer 1.8R (M/T)	P1.238M	five	1.8L inline4	125	118 5-speed	FWD	
Mitsubishi Lancer 1.8R (CVT)	P1.288M	five	1.8L inline4	125	118 6-speed	FWD	
Luxury Mid-size Sedan							
Chrysler 300 (A/T)	P1.238M	five	3.5L V6	250	250 5-speed	RWD	
Chrysler 300C (A/T)	P1.538M	five	5.7L V8	340	395 5-speed	RWD	
Chrysler 300C SRT8 (A/T)	P2.238M	five	6.1L V8	420	420 5-speed	RWD	
Volvo S80 2.5 T (Turbo) (A/T)	P1.238M	five	2.5L inline5	208	236 5-speed	AWD	
Volvo S80 T6 (A/T)	P1.538M	five	2.9L I6	272	284 6-speed	AWD	
Chrysler 300C HEMI (A/T)	P1.838M	five	5.7L V8	340	395 5-speed	RWD	
Audi A6 3.0 T (S-tronic)	P3.188M	five	3.0L supercharged V6	290	310 6-speed	AWD	
BMW 530i (A/T)	P3.188M	five	3.0L inline6	258	225 6-speed	RWD	
BMW 535i (A/T)	P3.788M	five	3.0L inline6	300	300 6-speed	RWD	
BMW 535i (M/T)	P3.788M	five	3.0L inline6	300	300 6-speed	RWD	
Mercedes-Benz E 350 Avantgarde (A/T)	P3.888M	five	3.5L V6	268	258 7-speed	RWD	
Jaguar XF Type S (V8) (A/T)	P3.888M	five	4.2L V8	300	300 6-speed	RWD	
Mercedes-Benz E 350 Avantgarde (M/T)	P3.888M	five	3.5L V6	268	258 7-speed	RWD	
BMW 535i (A/T)	P3.888M	five	3.0L inline6	306	300 6-speed	RWD	
Lexus GS 350 (A/T)	P3.888M	five	3.5L V6	306	254 6-speed	RWD	
BMW 535d (Diesel) (A/T)	P3.988M	five	3.0L inline6	286	381 6-speed	RWD	
Jaguar XF Type S (V8) Premium (A/T)	P3.988M	five	4.2L V8	300	300 6-speed	RWD	
Mercedes-Benz E 350 Avantgarde (A/T) Premium	P3.988M	five	3.5L V6	268	258 7-speed	RWD	
BMW 535i (M/T)	P3.988M	five	3.0L inline6	306	300 6-speed	RWD	
Jaguar XF Type S (V8) (M/T)	P4.038M	five	4.2L V8	300	300 6-speed	RWD	
Jaguar XF Type S (V8) (A/T)	P4.088M	five	4.2L V8	300	300 6-speed	RWD	
Audi S6 (A/T)	P4.188M	five	5.2L V10	450	398 6-speed	AWD	
Jaguar XF Type S (V8) Premium (M/T)	P4.188M	five	4.2L V8	300	300 6-speed	RWD	
Executive Sedan							
Hyundai Genesis 3.8 S (A/T)	P1.238M	five	3.8L inline6	290	264 6-speed	RWD	
Hyundai Genesis 4.6 (A/T)	P1.538M	five	4.6L V8	333	333 5-speed	RWD	
Toyota Camry 2.4 (A/T)	P1.538M	five	2.4L inline4	158	161 5-speed	FWD	
Toyota Camry 2.4 V (A/T) Multi-Shift(R)	P1.688M	five	2.4L inline4	158	161 5-speed	FWD	
Nissan Teana 230 JM (A/T)	P1.688M	five	2.3L V6	177	215 4-speed	FWD	
Mitsubishi Galant VR (A/T)	P1.688M	five	3.8L V6	227	255 5-speed	FWD	
Hyundai (A/T)	P1.688M	five	3.8L inline6	290	264 6-speed	RWD	
Honda Accord 2.4 (A/T)	P1.688M	five	2.4L inline4	157	162 5-speed	FWD	
Toyota Camry 2.4 V (A/T)	P1.838M	five	2.4L inline4	158	161 5-speed	FWD	
Toyota Camry 2.4 V Multi-Shift(R)	P1.838M	five	2.4L inline4	158	161 5-speed	FWD	
Honda Accord 2.4 S (A/T)	P1.838M	five	2.4L I4	158	161 5-speed	FWD	
Nissan Teana 250 XV (A/T)	P1.838M	five	2.5L V6	180	180 4-speed	FWD	
Subaru Legacy Sedan 3.0R (A/T)	P1.888M	five	3.0L H6	245	217 5-speed	AWD	
Honda Accord 2.4 S (M/T)	P1.888M	five	2.4L I4	158	161 6-speed	FWD	
Honda Accord 3.5 V6 (A/T)	P1.938M	five	3.5L V6	271	254 5-speed	FWD	
Toyota Camry 3.5 V (A/T)	P1.938M	five	3.5L V6	271	245 6-speed	FWD	
Honda Accord 3.5 V6 (M/T)	P1.988M	five	3.5L V6	271	254 6-speed	FWD	
Toyota Camry 3.5 V Multi-Shift(R)	P1.988M	five	3.5L V6	271	245 6-speed	FWD	
Luxury Executive Sedan							
Jaguar XJ 3.0 V6 SE (A/T)	P3.1M	five	3.0L I6	238	236 6-speed	RWD	
Jaguar XJ 3.0 V6 Premium (A/T)	P3.19M	five	3.0L I6	238	236 6-speed	RWD	
Jaguar XJ 3.0 V6 Portfolio (A/T)	P3.29M	five	3.0L I6	238	236 6-speed	RWD	
Lexus LS 460 L (Luxury) (A/T)	P3.738M	five	4.6L V8	347	328 8-speed	RWD	
Jaguar XJ 5.0 V8 SE (A/T)	P3.788M	five	5.0L V8	385	365 6-speed	RWD	
Jaguar XJ 5.0 V8 Premium (A/T)	P3.888M	five	5.0L V8	385	365 6-speed	RWD	
Jaguar XJ 5.0 V8 Portfolio (A/T)	P3.988M	five	5.0L V8	385	365 6-speed	RWD	
Lexus LS 460 L (Luxury) (M/T)	P4.138M	five	4.6L V8	347	328 8-speed	RWD	
Lexus LS 460 L (Sport) (A/T)	P4.238M	five	4.6L V8	347	328 8-speed	RWD	
Lexus LS 460 L (Sport) (M/T)	P4.638M	five	4.6L V8	347	328 8-speed	RWD	
BMW 730Li (A/T)	P4.738M	five	3.0L inline6	300	295 6-speed	RWD	
BMW 740Li (A/T)	P5.238M	five	4.0L V8	315	310 6-speed	RWD	
BMW 750Li (A/T)	P6.238M	five	4.8L V8	360	350 6-speed	RWD	

Grey anatomy. . .

rely on a specific base exchanges for the ATF and subsequently the radiator further. On sustained use, the both the ATF and the coolant in your radiator can overheat, causing both engine and automatic transmission failure.

There are even more parts aside from the heat exchangers automatically switching peak or pull-type electric fans help draw out heat from the heat exchangers. In the Philippines, some cars can have as much as four fans around the radiator, condenser, intercooler if the car is turbocharged, and even the engine oil cooler or ATF fluid cooler. Imported cars might not have as many fans to help draw out heat from the heat exchangers.

Electrical Problems

A lot of imported batteries are not designed to operate in very hot temperatures. It is made worse when they are placed in over-hot engine bays. This significantly shortens the lifespan of the batteries, sometimes as much as half. Imported cars from cold countries usually have batteries that are not suited for our climate, and are smaller in size and capacity. Coupled with an alternator that has a lower output rating typical with cars sold in moderately cool countries, import ratings drop significantly as the engine gets hotter. such that it is unable to charge up the battery to provide the right amount of electricity to power the modern car's sophisticated electronics such as the ECU, entertainment systems and various safety equipment. That rely on electrical solenoids to activate. Modern stocks found in this respect as they claim that all their batteries are designed and tested to operate in very hot and humid conditions.

Even if the electrical system was fine and the battery mounted in the trunk, I've seen wire conduits and insulation made of plastic melt in the corner/nose of the engine bays of jury-rigged cars. Once these conduits and insulation melt, they fuse with the wires and often cause the wires to short. There is still take you forever to find your electrical gremlin. Locally sold cars usually have a wire conduit or insulation made of a fire-resistant fabric and/or a rubber sock or boot, especially in areas where the engine wiring loom pass very near the engine's exhaust side.

Special options unsuitable here

In the Philippines, we admittedly get dumbed-down specifications in our cars compared to what other countries receive. But this is also for a good reason. some of these special options are useless (such as satellite radio and full-country satellite navigation) or will not be sturdy enough given our rough roads. Suspension is a good example. When Mazda launched their Mazda2, they opted to lower the car's suspension package available in other countries in Asia; simply because it would have been too low and too harsh for our local road conditions. Another example is Lexus' LS460 hard-hinge. Local models opted not to offer the air suspension because it is a potential problem in the future given our very poor roads. Browsing through the Lexus USA website, I also noticed the availability of downright bling. Insidalone 18-inch wheel and tire package that isn't offered here (precisely for the reason above). Those big wheels will be too harsh and have given our roads, resembling unacceptable tire and 195-millions ultra-luxury car.

While satellite navigation is slowly becoming popular in our country thanks to third party equipment and handheld GPS devices, cars with integrated screens for SAT-NAV and the like still cannot use this same software. Do you want to pay for an expensive decoration and be told to download maps from your car?

As for satellite radio, this will definitely take a while to happen in our country.

Parts availability

If your car is a Benz, Japanese or US spec different from what is offered locally, you will have a tough time finding some wear and tear and replacement parts since they do not have the same demand as mainstream. Examples of these parts include fuel and oil filters, brake pads and rotors, fuel pumps, and if should you find yourself with cooling system problems, the radiator and/or condenser for your imported grey matter car will most likely be different from what is readily available locally.

A friend had an original 160 hp Aquasun starlet-spec 4E-FE 1.3 SOS that had its radiator burst. He went to a radiator shop (the local dealer but discovered that the orientation of the coolant lines were different from his own and could not fit properly since the mounting tabs were different. He ended up special-ordering a radiator for his car which took months and was more than the local variant. Needless to say he was on foot for that entire duration.

Another friend decided to change his German-spec Audi's fuel filter but when the part arrived, it was different from his own had filter. He again ordered from abroad, waiting like time, money and irritations over such a small part.

Another one had his converted /imported Pajero suffer from warped brake rotors and worn out brake pads. The local Pajero brake rotor equivalent was different in size and thickness and he ended up paying double the price of the local equivalent as the only choice was to buy an upgraded aftermarket rotor set. And he also needed new brake pads but again, the same problem of parts incompatibility.

Possible can always argue that the Internet makes buying pats easier from abroad. But the nightmare of wait and most especially down-time for your car is a problem you can avoid. Imported parts can take over a month to arrive by sea freight, or if you go via express air delivery the cost is tremendous.

Lack of after-sales service, warranty and recall coverage

Sometimes, it is unavoidable that you'll have problems with your brand-new car. If it is a grey-market car, you'll have no warranty as the local dealer will definitely not give you warranty coverage been a car you didn't buy from them. That means shelling out more money on what should be a completely reliable brand-new car.

If your car has special insurance unavailable in the local variants, insure nobody can fix it properly the first time too as you'll be throwing money into an otherwise useless experiment to help teach the mechanics of your choice on how to repair that special part, fastener or option. Worse better off paying for someone's scholarship than paying for someone to learn how to fix your car, which ideally, should never have happened and you hope will never happen again. Ever.

Sometimes, certain cars have inherent problems that re accountants trying to find the cheapest way to build you car, or a specific component wasn't tested thoroughly in its prototype stage, or a supplier of a particular part decided to cheat on the manufacturers by skimping on quality work or uses materials. American car companies have been hit hard by numerous recalls. What it seems is when they try to keep it from the public eye as not to damage their reputation, leading consumers into ambushes on their products. At the very least the manufacturers can downplay the severity of the need to replace the part in question, simply stating that it is a better component and hence an added service given to valuable clients, all the usual PR crap.

Quite often, there's a confidential service bulletin advising dealerships to change particular parts free of charge when encountering their customers. Even if you are not charged for this part, it makes you wonder what else could be wrong with your car. And if your car was brought from abroad, chances are you'll never know there was a recall and the parts in question might be of consequence to your life. Granting the recall is made public, the local dealership will not change the part and perform the service for free (since your car is grey-market), resulting to additional cost in an otherwise brand-new car.

In the end, buying brand-new grey-import cars are not necessarily dangerous. This article is simply meant to enlighten the buyer to make an educated choice, knowing full well what he or she is getting into. There will always be a niche for grey-importers. But read up on the features, do some research about the quirks and idiosyncrasies of the particular grey-market car you're importing.

For the adventurous type looking for a sports/luxury brand should here, the allure will always be there since it is rare. But for those people, such cars will be unreal. third, fourth, even a fifth car in the garage which will be used only on early morning weekend fun-runs, special days and holidays. They will not be even used in the everyday work-week grind since they know their limitations. Have more a super-reliable car to use as work because a breakdown can mean getting fired or failing to draw that important deal while you are stranded in the best of the middle-ass, causing traffic and inconvenience to people in the process.

As for second-hand imports and converted cars, walk away. More often than not, there are a long list of serious, expensive and time consuming, not to mention dangerous, problems.

Please email the author at brianshi@yahoo.com

ISUZU CELEBRATES ONE-MILLIONTH UNIT IN THAILAND

As further proof of the D-MAX's quality and dependability, Isuzu has announced that the popular diesel pickup recently sold its one-millionth unit in Thailand, considered the pickup capital of the world. Yi Peich Isuzu (Isuzu), the official distributor of Isuzu vehicles in Thailand, marked the sales milestone with a special event hosted at the Impact Arena in Muangthong Thani—called "Isuzu D-MAX, 1,000,000 Units, 1,000,000 Years in Thailand"—attended by 17,500 guests.

MINI's big bash

exclusive," Cox said. "The nice thing about the MINI is that once you want to buy it, you won't consider anything else. Nobody can cross the MINI's market share."

Market study

Ito Yen revealed that they did not conduct a formal market study for the MINI (although the BMW Group did.) "We just asked around and were surprised to how many Minis there were, bought in the gray market, some classic, some later model," he said. "The MINI is for people who love the way a car handles. We're trying to attract the buyers of the Civic/SR, the Minis and the Civic to upgrade to the MINI. With my research and research marketing, we can convince our customers to buy a MINI."

By the time who prefer SUVs to cars, here's good news: Isuzu disclosed that the MINI Countryman, an all-wheel-drive, 4-door crossover, is coming to Manila in 2011 after its world premiere this year.

Will it be as lovable as the MINI Cooper? MINI fans wait with anticipation.

Eight treasures for Toyota

TOYOTA MOTOR PHILIPPINES POSTED a new record in 2009 with year-end sales of over 46,000 units, the highest the company has ever sold in its 21-year history in the local market.

As expected, Toyota achieved its eighth consecutive triple crown by also being the leader in both passenger cars and commercial vehicles segments.

As a way of thanking its customers for their momentous achievements, Toyota recently launched the Great Toyopoints Raffle Promo and extended its Savings Saver Promo to this month.

According to the report of the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines (Campi), combined Toyota and Lexus sales reached 4,988 units for the month of December alone, the highest monthly sales for the year. This gives them a total of 46,192 units sold for the year, capturing 34.9 percent of the market.

"This is a good note to end for 2009 for us. We have recently surpassed our 400,000-unit cumulative sales mark in mid-December, and our dealer network's consistent strong performance pushed another milestone, setting a new sales record of over 46,000 units," expressed Yuji Goto, TMP Executive Vice President. "In the leader-to-be local automotive industry, we are also happy that we remain consistent in achieving the Triple Crown, now for the eighth consecutive year. Despite numerous challenges the past year, including the global economic crisis, a couple of devastating calamities, and aggressive competitor efforts, we were still able to achieve these milestones."

Goto added, Toyota dominated both passenger cars with 17,237 units and commercial vehicles with 28,954 units for the year. This includes 11,999 units of Vios and 10,328 units of Innova, two of the country's best-selling vehicles.

Toyota sees 2010 as a growth year. "We foresee that the market will further grow if the positive trend continues. As far as Toyota is concerned, we will target to break another record next year and hopefully surpass this year's sales," added Goto. TMP earlier announced the introduction of new models starting with, Innova Apex Diesel in January. Aside from new products, TMP plans to continue aggressive efforts promising to loyally manufactured vehicles Vios and Innova, and promote affordability of their products with various financing schemes through their financial arm, Toyota Financial Services (TFS).

For the Great Toyopoints promo, customers of Vios get the chance to win an Altis 1.6G A/T, while Corolla Altis customers have the chance to win a Camry 2.4G A/T. Innova buyers can be the lucky winner of a Fortuner 4X2 Gas A/T while those who buy a Fortuner may be upgraded to a Previa 2.4G Gas A/T. Customers of participating models purchased from January to February 28, 2010 are eligible to join.

Aside from the raffle, Toyota's Avanza Xpress will also be extended for the Vios and Innova. Customers can choose from any of the three schemes. Buy Low scheme through TFS loans-to-own plan offers a low cash out and are all in package including free one year comprehensive insurance, three year CTD registration, and no chattel mortgage. Pay Light scheme offers low monthly plans with zero percent interest up to 12 months for select variants. Buy Cash rebates offers as much as P50,000 savings for cash buyers. The Toyota Savings Saver Promo runs until January 31, 2010.

"This is our way of expressing our gratitude to the loyal Toyota customers who have helped us become number one in 2009. By making our vehicles more affordable, we hope to offer a better and more prosperous new year to all," concluded Goto.

TOYOTA Motor Philippines Corp. officials led by Vice Chairman Alfred Ty (fourth from right) and President Michimoto Sugata (fifth from left) flash the No. 8 sign at the TMP corporate office in Makati. They are joined by Raymond Rodriguez, Lyra Garcia, Jing Abarca, Elijah Maclat, Cherry Bolano, Sarina Guerrero, Yuji Goto, Sugata, Ty, Lotso Morelos president Rene Ilo, Vitaliano Manansal III and Sherrie Ocsalev

TOYOTA Motor Philippines Corp. Vice Chairman Alfred Ty (left) and new President Michimoto Sugata

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MINI's big bash

QUESTION: WHY IS THE MINI spelled out in capital letters?

Answer: Because for such a small car, it makes such a BIG impression.

A big impression was precisely what Willy G. Tee and Michael O. Cua, the youngest president and veep of BMW importer British United Automobiles, Inc., were out to make when they inaugurated the BMW Global City showroom the other weekend at Fort Bonifacio.

Forget the economic recession. There was no cost-cutting for Tee and Cua who were eager to make the MINI launch a spectacular beginning for the Year of the Tiger, one befitting the dawn for impulsive cuties of the BMW brand. To comfortably accommodate all their high-end customers, business and golfing connections, trendy friends and the motoring media, the entertaining duo hosted not one, but two launch parties for the MINI—on Friday, Jan. 15 and Saturday, Jan. 16.

Corner

The venue was a 650-sqm showroom said to be three times Chevy dealership at the corner of 5th Avenue and 28th Street in Bonifacio Global City. The area has been converted into the MINI showroom with a red MINI Cooper hardtop hanging from sub-high above the floor and a yellow MINI Cooper S convertible on the ground. To complement the black interior of the huge, air-conditioned tent that was erected for the occasion, everyone was clad in black—black tees bearing the MINI brand for the rank and file, black suits for the execs including the Germans who joined in for the event and black cocktail dresses for the leggy models decorating the premises.

Having fun was the theme of the event. Big LED monitors were sponsored all around showing the original and remake of the "Italian Job" movie in which the MINI starred. Before the inaugural program began, an innovative "Free the MINI" game was held whereby the guests were invited to come down the collaborative curtain of the stage to grab hanging keys that would enable them to prizes.

Buffet tables laden with canapés were strategically located around, but the only alcoholic beverage available was Tanduay Ice. Tee's decision to replace the traditional bubbly toast with a flute of the glowing wine as quirky as the MINI Cooper's ergonomics. Not that the cocktail crowd received champagne or wine we got happy. One look at the MINI Cooper on display and everyone cleared up, that's how adorable and endearing the MINI is.

Owner

Before the program began, Günther Gröve, vice president for importer markets of the BMW Group who came in Manila for the MINI launch, told me that BMW owns the MINI and Rolls Royce, both of which are premium British brands. BMW acquired the Mini brand with the Land Rover in 1994, developed a concept in 1997 and launched the MINI Coupe in 2001.

The MINI is manufactured in Oxford, England, the only front-wheel-drive car in the BMW Group. As for similarities between the MINI and the BMW 1 series, Gröve replied that the MINI platform is unique from the 1 Series. "A lot of British technology remains in the MINI, especially front wheel drive and electronics," he said. "The MINI is a classic hot car, BMW 1 and MINI are different characters and the amount of customization is very small."

Tee Tek's Auto Hub counted the BMW Group for four years before finally bagging the MINI franchise early in 2009. Mike Cua told me, Their target sales volume is 135 units a year, or about 12 units a month. It was then a month, even before the MINI's formal launch, they already pre-sold 10 units. Not that kind of growth can't be sustained. The fact that it's priced as a premium car, it will always be.

BMW Asia managing director Johannes Sieberz, British United Automobiles, Inc. president Willy Tee Tee, GG Zubiaru, BMW AG Vice President for Importer Markets Graeme Grieve and BUAI vice president Mike Cua share centerstage with the MINI Cooper S.

BOTOX! Sanlee of Top One, InQuikk columnist Aida Mendoza, Johannes Gelbart and Dirk Pricaert

MINI Man, Johannes Sieberz, Frenchy Mesenlarrabal and Gina Tee

MINI's Cielo Fregil, InQuikk president Sandy Prieto, InQuikk columnist Joey Arnaiz and Fara Peña

MIKE Cua with Cielo Fregil and the sales superstars of MINI

BDF Hans Fernandez, Jeremy To, Hazarin To, Willy Tee Tee and Raoul Rosete

BRITISH Ambassador Stephen Lillie

WILLY Tee Tee with special guests of the MINI launch

CHARLIE Bolton and son JV of the InQuikk

ALBERT Martinez, Bambi Tee Tee and Mel Montecastro

TRACY Abad and Anthony Suntay

CORY Quirino

Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan Contributing Editor Lia S. Bernardo

LIFESTYLE Home & Entertaining

JORGE Ramos

Jorge Ramos returns to build a high-rise

The 68-floor Discovery Primea will stand on the former Gilarmi Apartments along Ayala Avenue

By Margo C. Enriquez
Contributor

AFTER WORKING ABROAD FOR several years, the name behind such iconic structures as the GSIS Building, the Heart Center and the Office of the Senate is back.

Architect Jorge Ramos, 73, and his son, architectural designer John Nicholas or Nick, 43, are out to make bigger projects, among them, the tallest luxury condominium in Makati, the 68-floor Discovery Primea.

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WIKO Zobel, renowned international businessman and polo player of last team, gets warm congratulations from past president Macapagal-Arroyo

CONSTANT THOSSOME. Miguel Rasmussen of Argentine Embassy and Maricic Ballino with Gloria Rollino

COLE Aguirre, Marco Erzetic, Ben Aguirre and Eduardo Lopez

KATHLEEN Bonoza, Nene Casimiro and Colleen Mangulo

Polo season opens with the exciting Past Presidents' Cup

AMBASSADOR. Minister and Belgrano Maria Macdonald with Diane Ruppenthal and Derek Page

LARA Reynolds, John Zobel, Justine Delay, David de Pedro and Daniel Reynolds

ADORABLE director Evelyn Farlan

PARISH Maren Heinrich, Marina Zobel, Carol Garcia and Heidi Ng

ANDRE and Natalie Parsonson (Canada, Professional Lady)

THOMAS Paphala and Anastasiia Yordanova (Poland, Professional Standard)

STARBALL organizing committee chair Michaela "Bong" Puno

IT'S THE SEASON FOR THAT chic sport which is polo, dahlings. The rich, nouveau riche, the famous, diplomats, beautiful people and tons of hard-core polo enthusiasts all went to the prestigious Enrique Zobel Field of Manila Polo Club for the Past Presidents' Cup, palengges.

The action began with the low goal match between the Gold and Blue teams. The game was hot and fast until it finished with a score of 4-3 in favor of the smooth Gold team.

Then it was time for the program to begin after drinks were served at the polo terrace with the ceremonial throw-in led by former MPC namesake-appalin presidents and incumbent president Juan R. Ramos. President Ramos welcomed the contestants and officially announced the start of the season after which the polo players did the traditional parade, which toed in the highly anticipated high goal match.

The 6-chukker play between the Reds and the Blacks was super exciting, with all the players giving everything they've got to this awesome match. Then the big moment, dahlings, with the final score of 10-6, the Reds bagged the first win of the season.

It was a fab Sunday afternoon with my friends, watching a totally fantastic polo match, palengges, while munching on the excellently prepared dinner and sipping Veuve Clicquot.

Chivas Regal campaign

That high-end drink with the suave set, Chivas Regal unveiled the Live with Chivalry campaign at the chi-chi, upscale Embahadorrest Bar at The Fort, with a stylish and successful turnout as the country's dashing and beautiful came in full chivalry mode, dahlings. Hitchhis regional marketing manager for Chivas Brothers Limited, the brilliant Darren Hooks joined in from Scotland, lending the ceremonial toast. There was no endless flow of champagne from d'source and overflowing Chivas on the rocks for the men and specialty concocted Chivas cocktails for the women.

The highlight was honoring some of the country's distinguished gentlemen "who embody the values of chivalry: gallantry, brotherhood, freedom and honor."

Indeed, the theme of the Chivas campaign has become even more relevant today, palengges, because, dark

TOASTING were distinguished gentlemen Boni Giordano, Conrad Rivamonte, Erik Cua and Carlo Tello (back at far right), Darren Hook, Kevin Lua and Carlos Cabrera

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using YKA Photo Solutions

gentlemen, people are going back to basics and honoring timeless, intrinsic values.

Cheers, chivalry!

Chinese painting exhibit, demo

Can't wait to see the latest art exhibit from the Confucius Institute of the ateneo de Manila University and Shangri-La Plaza when they present a Chinese painting exhibit and demonstrations, dahlings, on Feb. 3-11 at the Grand Atrium, Level 2. The exhibit will open at 6:30 p.m. on Feb. 3 by the Chan Lin family and the ateneo Confucius Institute by the Chinese painting students, including the already popular artist and my adorable soulmate Vicky Zobel, who will exhibit her awesome Tibetan paintings.

Chinese painting workshops will be held at 1:30, 3:4 and 5:30 p.m.

The other exhibit will be on Feb. 7 at Grand Atrium, Level 2, with a painting demo at 3 p.m. by the brilliant Dr. Alex Chan Lim and Dr. Stella Chan Lim, no less.

Check it out. I'll be there, palengges.

3rd Philippine Starball

The country's biggest, grandest and most awesome ballroom dance competition is taking center stage once again, dahlings. The 3rd Philippine Starball international ballroom championship will be the glamorous happening at the top of the line Makati Shangri-La Hotel on, take note, palengges, Feb. 13.

Working chair of the organizing committee, stylish Michaela "Bong" Puno, personally invited the top competitors she watched at the Blackpool Festival and The International competition in London.

Emcee will be Gary McMonagle, 10-time US national champion. The television special will be hosted by Charlene Jorgensen, seven-time Danish champion and World and European amateur champion, and former actor-singer Rudie Iverson.

Organized by Council of United Professional Dance Federations of the Philippines Inc., among others, palengges. Proceeds go to Kythe, a foundation helping children afflicted with cancer. For tickets, call Starnet at 8120404.

SIA A380 Quiz ongoing

Just because the holiday season is over doesn't mean you won't go on a holiday. Well, if you still haven't taken a crack at the Singapore Airlines A380 Quiz, now is your chance, palengges. The world's most-awarded airline is offering two Business Class seats in an exclusive raffle partnership with Philippine Tatler. Check out Philippine Tatler's 100th issue celebration with Singapore Airlines and win one of two round-trip Business Class tickets on SIA's awesome A380 to Melbourne, Australia. Answer 10 easy questions correctly and qualify for the raffle draw. Quiz and entry forms are available in the December and January issues of Tatler. Be one of the first to experience the widest Business Class seats on Singapore Airlines' iconic A380.

Check it out, and good luck, dahlings.

ASIA N Grdanes and Darren Hook, Citrus Brothers Ltd. regional manager

CHONG Mundokhai and Mark Dy

KIM Yeo, Jed Lim and Gino Reason

ANNE Bello, Agnes Bongcon and Ana Balao

SMASH HITSHOTS. Patrick Tan, Conrad and Kay Abacan, Tessy Alfonso and Jessie Suaco

ILLAC Dee, Alvin Alfonso, Xeng Zulueta and Dennis Miller

MARTIN Pulger, Kim Yao, Stephen Kuzmi and Erik Cua

VICKY Zobel's Chinese painting of Tibet player playing for his stay sweetheart

TIBETAN woman drinking tea, by Zobel

JOIN Singapore Airlines A380's raffle contest.

Jorge Ramos returns to build a high-rise

From page C2

The elder Ramos has established Pilderwood Development Corporation, which aims to repurpose its various businesses. Discovery Primea will stand on the former Oriental Apartments along Ayala Avenue. On the premise that many of its eventual population would be of mature age, it would include hospital facilities and services pertaining to Asian hospitals.

There will be 90 units ranging from 261 to 680 square meters. There is generous space, parties, lofty in the communal areas of the residential and service apartments, in consideration of the Filipinos' familial culture.

"The planning of the dwelling units allows for great flexibility in terms of layout, thus enabling the inhabitants to entertain friends and relatives in privacy much any manner they wish. This spaciousness is further magnified by the commanding views of the city afforded practically everywhere in the building," says Nick. "The residential kitchens are comparable to any that belong in a sizeable detached home."

Since Filipinos tend to accumulate and hoard, the units will also provide ample storage.

"Discovery Primea is born out of the Filipino reputation for warm hospitality. The serviced apartments block can be seen as a kind of 'guest suites' that forms part of a large private home. It will be a prominent landmark on the most prestigious of our avenues, and expresses our genuine love for living with its wonderful views in luxurious amenities, luxurious appointments and with close proximity to the best the city has to offer."

On the other hand, Widewood is also planning an eco-friendly and affordable housing project composed of 12 condominium towers. The Fujimoto Infinity is an ecologically sympathetic design need not be expensive.

"By following the rules set by nature and picking up on few clues such as the conditions of the site, sustainable design can be readily attainable," they say.

Achievements

Although Widewood is fairly new in operation has to both the achievements of the older Ramos and the energy of his son. In the early '00s, Ramos brought in new ideas from his studies abroad and incorporated local materials.

One of his early significant projects was the Manila Pond Building, where the interiors were elegantly wrapped in Philippine mahogany and glamorized with chandeliers. The exteriors were brought down to the level of a tabo.

"Both the teller and the customers were sitting down. It offered comfort for the customer," he says.

DISCOVERY Primea.

Ramos introduced other innovations. At First United Bank in Escolta, he found art and aesthetic balance by integrating a sun sculpture on the local wall. For the Tiaoqui residence, he built a modern dining room as an alternative to a flat floor area, and made use of Filipino materials such as capiz shells in sliding doors.

When he and Hartmut Aviso for Sculpture Signature Abaroa were just starting out, they collaborated on Ang Tibay floors in Escolta.

"It was the first time people saw those being incorporated with the bamboo sculpture to show off the quality of Ang Tibay."

Ramos' landmark project was the Bonifacio Center for Asia, where he was assigned out by famous Ben Lady Imelda Marcos. Commissioning to Fujimoto, Ramos built the medical arts building as a buffer between the noisy, dusty streets and the hospital with a courtyard in between. It was also the first wooden-love building.

"said the first time an operating table was also the patient's bed. The day before the surgery, the patient is being prepared on the bed. It is the same operating table wheeled into the operating room," says Ramos.

The patient rooms encircle the nurses' station for easier accessibility to nurses at emergencies.

Ramos, impressed with his talents and practicality, then asked Fujimoto to design the fixtures for showers in Room Nuevo: Laguna, Hawaii, Manila, the Palace in the Sky in Tagaytay, as well as the interiors of his New York apartment, to name a few.

Award-winning design

His design of the GSIS Building also won the Finative Solar Designs Award at the World Congress.

"It was a classic in energy-efficient architecture," explains Nick of his father's work. The energy crisis in the '70s drove the building to minimize dependence on fuel consumption.

"The design features the use of light shelves that catch sunlight and reflect this onto a series of mirrors so that even the spaces farther from the sources of natural light can be pleasantly well-lit with little or no use for electricity. The design also encouraged the opportunity to use greenery on the flat roof surfaces and take advantage of providing winds via breezeways to help keep the building naturally cool and comfortable. To devise maximum benefit from these prime design elements, it only became natural to stagger each floor back from the edges of the one directly beneath it, giving the building its distinctive terraces."

Aesthetically, it is not only the gesture of the Cantilever Terrace, it also celebrates the way rain water is gathered. "It collects rain water to eliminate at the uppermost level, then lets gravity do the job of watering the green roofs of the subsequent terraces," says Nick.

"What I like most about the GSIS building is how it demonstrates that Filipino architecture can be modern and abstract while still acknowledging our rich cultural heritage. It was systematic building that provided effective solutions organic to its design, to environmental issues that challenge us today more than ever before."

Migration to US

In 1961, the Ramoses emigrated to the States. Nick went to study Architecture at New York Institute of Technology and subsequently at the University of Pennsylvania.

"I never influenced my son to study architecture. If I don't have any work, he won't either," says Ramos.

But growing up in an architectural family, Nick enjoyed his environment. "Like an artist's studio, it was a purposeful hive of activity. There was always something interesting going on, something interesting to watch and learn from," says Nick.

Today Nick teaches at the University of Santo Tomas and, at Widewood's architectural design agency, is involved in the massive process from research and concept to project presentation. On his own, he's made entire plans ranging from a series of boat terminals for a proposed river cruise in Marawi to a weekend hideaway home in Tagaytay, among others.

"My father is a spiritual influence in my attitude toward architecture," says Nick. "He imposed upon me that beyond abstract theories and lofty aesthetic principles, there is perfect design for people. Since then, when given any set of realistic that exists in the surface is off be equally right. I've been most readily able to recognize the good' aesthetic in light of 'my' belief in advice."

On Widewood, Nick says it was established in earnest earlier in the year to develop its own construction projects.

"In effect, we can become our own clients. But the greatest challenge that faces us is the reluctance of people to invest in good, ecologically friendly or sustainable design. They say they can't afford it. Our solution is to make them realize, by means of our work, that they can't afford not to."

Out-of-the-box tips on wrapping gifts

From page C4

look as an accent and insert a card.

• A pasta enthusiast can be put inside a pasta bowl. Brush up raffia strands, which give the illusion of pasta, and garnish with dried leaves that look like herbs. A set of wooden pasta servers can be added to this wooden bowl gift.

• Instead of wrapping a set of hand towels, tie them with a nice satin ribbon. Don't hesitate to buy as basket that will be perfect for the powder room. Add accents like an oversized soap dispenser and ceramic tray with soaps and lotion.

• The surprise can give ethnic opening a little refreshment with a ring inside depends on how you package the ring. An egg cup that is heavy enough or tea light holder can be ring holders. Fit in dry floral foam and insert the ring in hold to place. Cover the foam with beads or little crystals.

TIED A SET of hand towels with satin ribbon and put them on a tray. Add accents like soap and lotion.

• Give life to salt and pepper shakers shaped as fruits of children. Put them in a little bowl filled with fine pebbles that look like salt crystals. They can be presented as if enjoying themselves in a little playground.

• For a refreshing take on giving a nice glass pitcher, fill in the brim with lemons and glass cubes. Tie a ribbon and insert a wooden stirrer. Use the tip to hold the gift card.

• Bag-shaped scented candles can be placed in cabinet with drawers to elevate, create a garden of bunched-up raffia mixed with freshly cut leaves and small flowers.

• A necklace made of birds and pressed a star pen shell hanged can be taken out of the box. Present in a small fish bowl filled with sand and seashells for an aqua ribbon to reflect the colors of the sea.

The note cards, table heat bank aids, pasta bowl, wood as pasta servers, bath accessories, cocktail rings, salt and pepper shakers, and paint bird face and pen shell hangs are all available at Hart, 4th Upper Street, Makati. Books on paint and interior design are from National Bookstore. Bag-shaped candles are from Cotto, Greenhill 3, while the glass fish bowl is from Landmark.

FILL a glass pitcher with lemon and glass stirrer. Tie [illegible] and insert a wooden stirrer. PHOTOS FOR STORY

Do-it-yourself

D.I.Y.

With Anton Bautista and Marina Lopa

Out-of-the-box tips on wrapping gifts

GIFT-GIVING CAN BE CONSIDERED an art. It takes skill and creativity to wrap a gift, but you can also have fun in packaging a gift. Do away with wrapping paper.

- Use unconventional ways to present a gift.
- Look for items you might have lying around in your house which relate to the item you are giving.
- Draw catch attention that will enhance the gift.

Here are more suggestions that might inspire you to give wholeheartedly.

- An acrylic tray is a perfect way to present personalized stationery for a fashionable friend. A box of note cards and pen can be tied with a bow and a tassel which gives a touch of color.
- Teddy bear bookends could be put in a box and wrapped, but exposing them is more practical. Use the top of the box to secure the bookends. Place a book that the recipient will enjoy reading in between them. Tie a bow around the

OUT-OF-THE-BOX | C2

PLACE a book (unknown tackily bear bookends using a bow an ACCENT

PASTA combinati in a bowl with wooden pasta servers

ELEVEN MONTHS A YEAR HE'S A PAGE BOY. THIS FEBRUARY HE'S CUPID.

LOVE IS IN THE AIR THIS MONTH AT THE PENINSULA. OUR DEDICATED AND CREATIVE STAFF IS A BIG REASON WHY. THEY'LL DO WHATEVER YOU WISH TO MAKE THIS YOUR MOST ROMANTIC VALENTINE'S EVER. AND OF COURSE OUR CHEFS, ROOM SERVICE AND SPA WILL BE ALWAYS AT YOUR CHOICE AND SURE TO PLEASE YOU AND YOUR SWEETHEART. PLUS YOU CAN OPT FOR OUR UNIQUE ORANGE VALENTINE PACKAGE UNTIL FEBRUARY 28. BE WOWED OUT OF A LONGING TO USE MEN'S CHOICE LUXURY BOUTIQUE IN DECEMBER 3. ENJOY A SUMPTUOUS CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST AND PRIVATE SHOPPING ALL BEFORE THE STORE OPENS TO THE PUBLIC. RESERVE A ROOM AT THE PENINSULA MANILA NOW AND ENJOY AN UNFORGETTABLE VALENTINE'S.

THE PENINSULA
MANILA

DON'T IT ROMANTIC?
THE PENINSULA MANILA
PROMISES A DELICIOUS
VALENTINE'S WEEKEND

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LIFESTYLE Parenting

Yoga for moms–and kids, too

Bond with your children through this healthy exercise

By Belle Morales Makerte

THESE DAYS, IT'S NOT surprising to see moms and babies in a yoga studio doing stretching and twisting and turning upside down in fun play.

And it's a good thing to know that more and more mommies are learning healthy ways to bond with their kids.

For Maricrist Rollece Tordesillas, yoga is amazing. "Baby yoga is one of the best ways to communicate physically and mentally with your kids and enjoy quality time together."

"It is a great way to encourage active play. It's important because at this stage, for your urbanites and before, their way of learning is to play," said Tordesillas.

And in playing, there's active involvement—whether physical, social or mental.

Important component

With that in mind, the students of Pamper in association with the Mother and Child Nurses Association of the Philippines (MCNAP) and Gymboree Play and Music, a world-renowned early childhood education program, recently launched the "Yoga Storytellers."

It's a fun playtime routine that combines

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ATOMO AND WEEDY

KIBO MACHINE

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Romantic discussions with your partner may be tense today, because people feel irritated and cool with each other. You can apply especially to conversations with friends or relatives. Now and The whole world has this way today!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You might feel self-critical and overly worried about your health. It's wise to avoid immediately out of today. Try to lighten up. Stay worried, this might be just what you need.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Money flows right to you. You might be surprised about cash flow. Now would be something extra or who there's always so much money left at the end of the month.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Today, the Moon is in your sign, which makes you feel more emotional than usual. Tension at home makes a lot of sense to you today, and this could create a feeling of pressure. It's gone in 24 hours.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): It's easy to feel lonely and not all it looks like it could be. This is not really the truth, it just feels that way. Life looks so much better to

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Someone asks or invite unplanned night to social or out today. (You need this like a fish needs a bicycle.) Try to give it time.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is a good day to spend with parents. You are loveable and extremely flippant. Everything will just go smooth in a New York romance. Postpone important requests for tomorrow.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Avoid disputes about religious issues and moral matters today. Others simply don't go up against each-wo, professors or authority figures at school or publishing and the media. Not today!

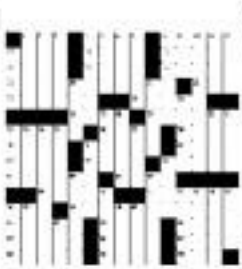
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might be tempted to spend your fair share of overselling. Others might seem stingy to you today. Wait until tomorrow to see how things look.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Conversations with partners and your friends are difficult because either you or others are confused and unsure. This is not the day for genuine misunderstandings.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Be cooperative with co-workers and an important co-operative today. It's very easy to be failed off by and pressure with others, and relax around how does it.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Romance is in the cards today. You emotions are run coffee. Activities with children will seem burdensome.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

		1	8	9	7	4		
	9						5	
3								
1								
5			2	4		6	9	7
6								2
8								3
	6						4	
		5	9	6	2	8		

Difficulty Level: ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and progress at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	3	6	1	9	8	7	2	4
9	2	1	6	4	7	3	8	5
7	8	4	5	3	2	6	9	1
1	7	9	8	6	4	5	3	2
3	6	8	9	2	5	1	4	7
4	5	2	7	1	3	8	6	9
8	4	5	3	7	9	2	1	6
2	1	7	4	8	6	9	5	3
6	9	3	2	5	1	4	7	8

What can we learn from the Jason Ivler saga?

THE JASON IVLER SAGA IS A story of loss on many different levels.

On the one hand, there are the Ilustres, who lost a much beloved only son. Unless you have been through the experience yourself, you will never be able to fathom what it's like to lose a child.

And then there is the story of Jason Ivler, who has been portrayed in the media in many ways—a divorced son, by his mother; a loving and quiet cousin and nephew; a seemingly ruthless killer. Could he be all of these?

ROOTS AND WINGS

Cathy Babao-Cabahug

This is a story that has loss painted all over the landscape of two very different families

Death wish

One thing that struck me, and perhaps many others, was his seeming death wish—a notion on his bank signifying his desire to die, and his plaintive cry for death at the moment he was subdued. This much we can see—that Ivler is a deeply troubled young man, that there is pain somewhere, buried deep inside his psyche, that perhaps manifests itself in acts of violence.

The classmate and sport Jason Ivler, as his uncle Freddie Aguilar has described him, must have been hurled underneath the rubble of some deeply traumatic incident. In his story alone, there are many losses, too.

It was interesting for me to find out that mom had lost his father early in life. If his mother is to be believed, the older Ivler had died a violent death in the hands of a professional killer. It was a death Jason did not know about until his early teens.

I wonder now what stories Marlene Aguilar must have shared with her son during those years. Aguilar has also publicly admitted to a show of homosexual interest between him and Jason was growing up.

Of course, losing a parent early on does not justify what he did, but perhaps there is something there, and to the "role models" he had, that may give us a key to discovering why he turned out the way he did.

Lifelong impact

In the book, "The Loss that Is Forever," which talks about the lifelong impact of the early death of a mother or father, Dr. Maxine Harris describes the "void of control" which that sometimes results from losing a parent early in life.

"In the absence of a parental guide, some children find themselves running wild. They do not know how to control impulses or how to moderate their behavior. At first, the lack of a parental boundary feels like unburdening freedom. But soon, however, it quickly becomes overwhelming, and the child feels as if there is no wall to contain his or her self."

The loss of a parent in childhood becomes a defining moment that alters everything throughout the child's life, often all the way to adulthood. Support systems are crucial in helping the child heal from the trauma of loss.

The surviving parent becomes the child's whole world when a loss has taken place, suddenly thrust in a world that is no longer secure and safe; the safe parent becomes the source of the child's existence, his or her anchor of security. If the child is unable to find safety and security there, where is he left to turn to?

Deeper understanding

I feel very strongly for the Ilustre family that having been on both sides of the spectrum...losing a much-beloved only son, and also having lost a father very early in life...I try to be more tolerant and understanding of the ghosts that lurk behind the persons.

This is a story that has loss painted all over the landscape of two very different families. A precious life was lost when a young man whose life held such promise was senselessly gunned down.

There are many lessons to be learned here not only about parenting but about having a broader and deeper understanding of each and every person's history.

Harris speaks on behalf on many of us who know the loss of a parent early in life: "In my view one is marked by early loss—may caused dramatic and perhaps enduring. Survivors of early loss do not 'look different' from the rest of us. Their loss is invisible and unseen by most of us."

Harris says majority of the subjects she interviewed have come in love and share their lives with another survivor of early loss.

"It was as if each did indeed have a mark, perhaps only visible to another survivor, but a mark nonetheless serving as a special clear to one who had been through the same experience. In Ben Hecht's words, these were all people who had been 'to the edge of the world and looked over its last foot of territory into nothingness.'"

Heartwarming movie

On a positive note, the role of positive parenting, unconditional love and support in the theme of "The Blind Side," a heartwarming movie that opens in cinemas tomorrow. It is the true story of Michael Oher, a homeless and traumatized boy who became like Hercules, Goodes football player and first round NFL draft because of a family who helped him believe in him.

In the same manner, Oher's presence in the Tuohys' lives leads them to come intoenlightened self-discoveries of their own. The best real-life stories, they say, are those that read like fiction. Sandra Bullock, who won a Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild award for her portrayal of the spunky Leigh Ann Touhy, shines in every scene. You'd be applauding at the end of the film, as I was.

"Writing A Silver Lining," a six-week writing workshop to help one heal from the loss of a loved one through death, illness or broken relationships, will be held starting Feb. 20. E-mail writesilver@gmail.com.

E-mail the author at cathybabao@gmail.com

Yoga for moms—and kids, too

From page D1

yoga moves with stretching to help in the development of kids' mind and body.

"Yoga Stretchy-ize routine supports the physical and brain development of your baby by maintaining body movement," explained Bodoc-Illas.

Studies show that, during the first two years of a child's life, the brain grows fastest and kids discover new things as they move along. They learn about their social and physical environment before they can even speak.

"The active baby Yoga is really a period for developmental achievements and intellectual growth. It's a time of intense exploration of the environment as children attempt to find out how things work," said Isabella Calabria, SHOAP president.

Research by the US National Association of Sports and Physical Education showed that, "the physical activity of infants and young children is an important component of early brain development and learning. Positive early movement experiences increase the infant's chances of achieving full developmental potential throughout life."

"What you teach your kid in this stage really matters. The nine months to toddler years are [really] crucial in the child's development," said Bino de las Alas of MCSAP.

Fun and hip

The Pampers Yoga Stretchyize also helps kids get a healthy start to life. Since the new exercise routine is fun and hip, it becomes a source of pleasure for both moms and kids.

Yoga is known for its many benefits: it enhances physical development and provides opportunities to develop perceptual skills, motor skills, directional awareness and balancing skills. It also helps aid digestion and promotes good sleep.

It improves social and language skills as well. When playing, children learn to share, take turns and cooperate.

During the launch, participants were treated to a first-hand demonstration of baby yoga techniques. Bodoc-Illas showed different methods like the Bippity Bop, scratch and reach, zippy zoo touch, and wrap and wiggle.

The assured participants these techniques are safe and are designed with babies in mind.

"For as long as the baby can hold his head up and can roll over, it's fine," she said. Babies are strong as nine months can actively participate."

Gentlemen often choose for kids of all ages. It also encourages active play for parents and their children, with especially designed equipment, bright hues and unique pieces, a variety of props and trained teachers to create an environment that will stimulate a child's physical, cognitive and social development.

Visit www.pampers.ph for schedule and more pampers.ph.

YOGA session with Marlene Aguilar-Tuohy and kid

A Monster Meal of a Deal at Shakey's

For it's 30th Anniversary, guests should be prepared for wonderful surprises and benefits from Shakey's like the Monster Meal Deal that will satisfy even the most overindulgent appetites and expectations, perfect for sharing with up to a dozen people.

As Filipinos, we love to eat and find any occasion to come together and feast! Make the most out of every day and celebrate each moment with your friends and family and Shakey's Monster Meal Deal is the perfect meal set for large groups and huge appetites. Because of the delicious variety of food, decisions are not a problem; everyone will definitely have a favorite Shakey's dish with this meal package.

The set starts off with a deliciously crisp brick-oven baked Manager's Choice followed by a large Pepperoni Thin Crust Pizza. This pizza pair is perfectly paired with two pasta dishes: the rich and flavorful Classic Spaghetti and Carbonara Supreme Platter. On top of all that, an awesome twosome Chick 'N Chips Party Pack is served with 3 pitchers of ice cold Coke.

This amazing deal is available for only P1,595.00 (dine in, P1,796 for delivery), saving you as much as P629.00 for dining with family and friends! For a party of twelve, get head cost with only be P132.92! Now that's a sweet Monster Deal! Definitely, good value for money. This is definitely how to eat, eat, eat without paying a lot, eat, lot.

What's even better is that the Shakey's Monster Meal Deal is available for dine in, carry out or delivery, giving you the luxury to enjoy your Shakey's favorite wherever you are.

So hurry, visit the Shakey's restaurant nearest you or call now for delivery service to enjoy your all time favourites from Shakey's! Have a Monster Meal Deal!

Celebrate Shakey's 30 years, home of the original thin crust brick oven baked pizza! Visit Shakey's biggest restaurant in the world along Quezon Avenue to experience Fun, Family, Pizza in a bigger box! For fast and efficient delivery, please call 77-777 and remember, if it's late, it's FREE!

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TECHRON
*Accumulate charge slips worth P25,000 with minimum amount of P5,000 per charge slip

We find ways!

Third-generation kids are our best hope

By Marina Benipayo
and Marvin Mark Castro
Contributors

AT A CAFÉ, MARK AND I were discussing an issue familiar to everyone—the 2010 elections. We did not delve on who to vote, but rather, on how our country would be like in the future, regardless of who the president may be.

I told Mark, my best friend, that I am constantly thinking of my kids' future.

Everything, from basic needs to education, transportation and technology, is becoming costly. When we were young, we survived with an allowance of 20 cents a day. Today, how much does it cost for our kids to buy their simple needs? Can our kids handle the economic, lifestyle and personal challenges of the future?

An hour through our laughter and sighs, I asked Mark, "What do you think? Is there any real hope for the next generation?" I mean, we, in our own generation are, I guess, okay. We've lived about half of our lives already and we have survived. We'll be okay. But what about our kids? And our kids' kids?"

After listening to his lengthy but lucid, fully insightful answer, I requested that he write down what he just said, because it was perhaps what I and most parents have been thinking all along.

Here is what he had to say:

Who is our next generation?

Our fresh graduates? The college students? Their contemporaries regardless of their socio-economic status?

What do they see on TV and hear on the radio? What do they read on the papers? What do they browse on the Internet? Information now is so accessible and no longer limited to the confines of the room or TV.

We current step it. And, frankly, we are no longer Optic 4. The odds are against us parents. The daily bombardment of advertisements, pulp news, blogs, is more than what we can command with, aside from the unavoidable global situation that we are facing as a society.

Look at our politics. Look at our entertainment. In politics, the names have remained the same since I was a kid. In entertainment, endless gossip and bilind chad women have replaced literally-talented shows.

What do we, both I (Mark) and the next? Do we just keep on painting fingers?

Since most of the minds of the next generation have been farmed by materialism, our best option is the third generation.

Why so? Do a random check on how the next generation defines success. Money and power can be achieved through corrupt politics. Fame and fortune can be achieved through shows biz.

As early as now, let's skip the TV and spend quality time with our toddlers instead, or have our kids play creatively with other children

Now, we have also achieved much. The situation is not hopeless. The third generation can be shaped as early as today. Let's teach them what it was like when we were kids, when our kid caregiver values can be classed on faith alone, but rather on moral values that are shaped from the earliest development of a child.

The third generation encompasses a larger sector: high school students, elementary students, toddlers, kids in preschool, the babies in your wombs.

Perfect time

But to just my personal opinion, **but since these kids still have limited exposure** to the advertising gods, this is the perfect time for us to step in and explain to them the true value of life.

I bet kids today would not be able to believe that we once sat around the fields of Manilla flying a kite with our parents, our grandparents, and even our neighbors. It was a tradition...now, sadly, gone. But there is a chance. You do not need an appreciable amount of money or quality time to your children. We only need time—quality time, that is.

As early as now, let's skip the TV and spend quality time with our toddlers instead, or have our kids play creatively with other children, or allow them to exercise their first lessons from falling down and standing up again—the story it is in life.

We can wash the dishes with them. We can decorate the house with them. We can read to them. We can even sit around and do nothing with them, providing them the worthless assurance that we will be there for them, no matter what.

It takes a generation to replace a generation. But let's extend that to the third generation, since we can bear mold them to their full potential, before the Internet takes over, before the advertisers take over, before the politicians take over, before they grow their own, and, yes, before those bilind chad women take over.

In psychology, they say that a child's mind is basically set by the time he or she is seven. So parents, we basically have about 15 years to spend with our kids before they start their own quest for independence.

The best is yet to be, there's a true-wise parenting it's said. The second best time is now.

Try that with your kids.

If you find this hard to do, it may be because you either haven't tried or haven't tried and given up.

Please don't ever give up. For as long as we are still breathing, there's always hope.

Change will always begin at home. Because, after all, change begins with you.

Marina A.L. Benipayo is a self-development and behavior management coach. She conducts seminars on empowerment, leadership and empowerment. E-mail: marina_benipayo02@yahoo.com or visit www.marinabenipayo.com.

Give us back the sidewalks

THE CONSUMER
Linda A. Bolido

EVERY TIME THE METRO MANILA Development Authority and local government officials revive their campaigns to clear sidewalks for pedestrians, they always target vendors and people who live on the streets.

But being ambulant, at least those "sound suspects" only have to pack up what little possessions they have and move to another spot. They do not cause permanent blockage of sidewalks.

When will Metro Manila officials turn their attention to people who have made sidewalks their personal property, depriving pedestrians of a space where they can walk safely and not put their lives at risk of being run over by public utility vehicles driven by inconsiderate, sometimes even reckless, drivers?

In Manila, for instance, many barangays have put up their barangay halls on the middle of sidewalks, building concrete edifices that completely block pedestrians.

Many property owners also have effectively increased the sizes of their lots by fencing off some of the sidewalks, leaving only the width of a person's foot for pedestrian use. Sometimes, pedestrians are even deprived of that little space as they are lifted with flower pots or boxes.

Just recently, I saw a new fence put up that turned a sidewalk into an office's garage.

And the sidewalk pen for what space they had claimed as their own? We can only begrudge that to most streets in Metro Manila, traffic is always so jammed that people who have been deprived the use of sidewalks are made to walk at the edges of the street and still feel relatively safe because vehicles are moving so slowly.

It is bad enough that sidewalks are so badly maintained that people risk getting a sprain, or worse a fracture, every time they use them. But having to walk on the street because the sidewalks have already been claimed as personal property by some people who have put up fences or other physical signs for size of getting billed.

Do local officials have the political will to have those obstructions removed? I am not a lawyer but it seems to me, since sidewalks are public property, structures built on them can be torn down without any liability on the part of the government. In fact, those **people who have claimed the sidewalks** for their own use should pay the government **for the inconvenience they have caused.**

Pedestrians really need to get the sidewalks back because in this country, most motorists have no respect for them. In cities and towns, the pedestrian has right of way even if he/she is jaywalking really.

But here, many drivers, particularly those operating public utility vehicles, will not yield an inch to a pedestrian. In fact, they speed up when they see someone attempting to cross the street, moving the extra one of the hapless pedestrian.

In some parts of the metropolis, traffic lights just for pedestrians have been put up, but unless a vehicle barangay is crossing the street, most motorists will ignore the red light. The traffic light hardly makes it safer for pedestrians to cross these streets given the mentality of many Filipino drivers.

Fix parts to spare

Many people whose cars and/or appliances were damaged by Tropical Storm "Ondoy" and Typhoon "Pepeng" are still waiting until now for repair—as these machines no longer manufacture kinds of spare parts. A friend's car is still in the Honda garage because they could not get the spare parts needed. Another's samsung refrigerator was virtually declared an "unrepairable" by the technician because the spare part needed was no longer available.

Delivery vans in the country in September and June followed about a week later by Pepeng. You would think that by this time, service centers would have already been able to get the parts needed to complete repairs. Do they have to manufacture these parts? Curious, four months seem to be long enough to get the work done, don't you think?

Feedback

Ms. Melita C. Bautista wants to call the attention of the management of the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) about certain problems with the E-pass.

She says she has to check her transactions every month because there are times when the toll charges are incorrect—the **is charged for driving a truck or bus, instead** of a car. Other times, the charges have her entering SLEX from Calamba when she normally starts from Bicutan on the way to Makati.

The incorrect charges, she says, have inconvenienced her a number of times, as she is not allowed to use the E-pass lane for insufficient balances. Last year, she says, she found charges in her statement dating back to 2006. And right now she is still waiting for them to send her a detailed statement of the 2006 charges.

Send letters to The Consumer, Lifestyle Section, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 5/F Chino Roces Ave. cor. Mercedes and Rizal Sts., 1204 Makati City; fax 897-6793/94 or e-mail lbolido@inquirer.com.ph

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MARLENE Aguilar: Awkward circumstances

From 'Ka Freddie' to sis: It's okay to sing just for friends

By Pocholo Concepcion

MARLENE AGUILAR IS READY FOR her own close-up.

A peculiar hallelujah to last week's headline-hogging crime story involving the arrest of a young man embroiled and is currently being stretched to show his spectacular proportions. Marlene, the young man's mother, is the newest character on the landscape, generating attention and mounting fines best delivered in a whisper.

Images and soundbytes of Marlene that have played out on news programs and entertainment shows portray a person who loves the camera to bits and speaks her mind, never mind that her words sometimes defy logic.

Utterly dramatic was the first time the public saw her on TV: distraught, eyes welling with tears, desperately pleading for her son to come out of hiding.

When cops descended on her house in search for her son, TV cameras captured a bizarre moment: Marlene, looking dazed and confused, cursing the face of an NBI agent as she tried to get a handle on the situation.

Intriguing interviewee

Many were amused, noting that she looked "like Techie Agbayani from certain angles." Others thought it was Caridad Sanchez that she resembled.

In any case, Marlene proved to be intriguing interview material, thanks to her ability to talk right off the bat. She could go on and on. In one particular instance, she was the quintessential grist for the gossip mill, speaking as she did about famous lovers reincarnated to be underworld characters. On another occasion she was dreamingin phantasmagoric, rambling about conspiracy theories and world

PHOTO P2

Romance saved Vigan in wartime

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

ROSA ISABEL'S HISTORICAL DRAMA "Hiro" chronicles how a Japanese soldier's affections for a Filipino maiden saved Vigan from certain destruction in World War II.

It's a little-known aspect of our history, said Pajarillo, whose film debuted at the Cinemalaya last year and opens today in the Solidifilms in Robinsons Galleria.

"Every town has a story and Vigan is no exception," he related. "Who knew that a 400-year-old ancestral architecture of Vigan, Ilocos Sur, was preserved because of the romance between a Japanese Kempetai officer and a local girl? It was a love that flourished in a time 'Evangle with danger, suspicion and prejudice," he said.

For the world

In 1999, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) declared Vigan as a World Heritage Site.

"Vigan does not belong only to the Ilocanos. It's a source of identity and pride for all Filipinos, a treasure for all mankind," Pajarillo said.

Shooting in picturesque Vigan proved to be the big challenge. Pajarillo's toughest hurdle was "to make an independently produced 'period film' with a limited budget within a limited time frame in a beautiful place like Vigan. Any director would've been tempted to linger and experiment ... to capture the beauty of the place. Unfortunately, we didn't have the luxury of time."

Three scripts

Using a Panasonic HVX 200A with PS Teknik Adapter, Pajarillo had taken the cast, led by Rayo Abad and Hiroyuki Takashima, to Vigan and Baguio where they stayed for 15 days.

"We chose this type of camera because it's full HD (High-Definition). PS Teknik allowed us to use various film lenses to achieve a 35mm look," he explained.

Working with Japanese actors also proved tricky. "Hiroyuki, doesn't speak Filipino. I needed an interpreter. We had two scripts—Nihonggo for the Japanese actors Hiroyuki, Hiro Sekioka and Kura Sudzuka, and Tagalog for the Filipinos. We also had one in Ilocano. We somehow pulled it off."

Pajarillo said he was awed working with the cast. "I felt fortunate to direct a versatile actress like Rayo. Hiroyuki, Hiro and Kura were dedicated to their craft as well."

E-mail: bayansandiego@hotmail.com

RAYO Abad and Ping Medina in "Hiro."

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MARLENE in a video grab of her performance at Hobbit House in Ortigas

From 'Ka Freddie' . . .

Frontpage F1

reside connected to her life and her son's troubles, inferences that would seep Marlene's money in his media.

A show biz jabber no less, declaring that he had been friends with Marlene for some years, conveyed discernment after interviewing her. "Straightening wisdom" was how he described the session.

That interview, in fact, ended on a moral marvel note— Marlene plugging a singing gig at the SM music club Hobbit House:

"Pwede ko nga ho bah-ki nya pangarap 'yon," said singer songwriter Freddie Aguilar—Marlene's eldest husband—when Inquirer Entertainment asked what motivated his sister's foray onto the performance stage.

The show, held Saturday night, was a follow-up to a previous performance dubbed "Sad Stories" held October last year at the same venue.

That one featured Marlene with Boots Padilla, a sister of Rebin Padilla, whom Freddie described as an "ex-girlfriend."

Gutsy

Freddie revealed embarrassed admissions about why Marlene did not choose to hold her gig at his Freddie's...bik. rum club in Malate.

A couple of videos from Marlene's brother show have been posted on YouTube, interpreting a country song, "Thy Treasure Holds," and a romantic ballad, "Love Me Tender," the most remarkable thing about them is, truth to tell, her guts.

Freddie recalled that Marlene—third of five siblings —studied liberal arts at Ateneo de Manila University and used to run a hotel in the United States owned by the paternal grandmother of her son, Jeremy Jess.

Reflecting on the awkward encounters now being his stock, Freddie offered a piece of advice. "It's OK to sing in front of friends . . . but professionally I don't think she should pursue it. Some people may just be exaggerated."

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Sherlock Holmes as action hero

FOR WEEKS NOW, WE'VE BEEN LOOKING forward to watching "Sherlock Holmes." Guy Ritchie's brisk and bracing update on the reimagining of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's traditionally dour tales about the exploits of London's most brilliant sleuth, long before James Bond was created by Ian Fleming.

The way Ritchie has fiercely reimagined him, Holmes now steals Bond in his macho appeal and derring-do. Even his dry and crotchety associate, Dr. Watson, has been reconfigured into quite a dashing figure in his own right.

It's an across-the-board transformation and incarnation that's been long in coming and is downright welcome for that fact. Of course, Ritchie's

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

unfailingly irreverent gambit wouldn't have worked without the extraordinary participation and entertainment of actors Robert Downey Jr. (Holmes) and Jude Law (Watson), and the vile beauty of Mark Strong as Watson's arch nemesis, Blackwood.

In the update's canny planting, Blackwood makes full use of necromancy and magic to effect the complete takeover of England's official and financial institutions—and that's just for starters, because his overall ambition is the subjugation of the entire world!

Like Bond's nemesis

Shades of James Bond's own brilliant yet demented nemeses, with the added exotic touch of Blackwood's occult preoccupations and obsessions.

Early on, Holmes is able to get the villain behind bars and even effect his death sentence. But, member of troupe wonders, Blackwood is able to survive his own execution, scaring all of London to the point of hysteria, and it's up to Holmes and Watson to get to the bottom of the weird and abominable-looking mystery.

The film also makes it a point to involve Holmes in amazing bare-of-brilliant deduction and physical prowess, the better to underscore his now "action hero" persona. Granted, Downey isn't the most physically imposing actor in the world, but with the help of deft cinematic trickery, he's able to pull the transformation off.

Despite those hugely diverting highlights, "Sherlock Holmes" is occasionally deficient on points of exciting plotting and character development. The film also feels too long, with its

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QUENTIN Tarantino

SAG wins may fetch Oscars

LOS ANGELES... Jeff Bridges and Sandra Bullock's chances for Academy Award gold were advanced with their trophies at the Screen Actors Guild Awards, but the Bookhunter "Avatar" may have left a touch blue.

The computer-animated pod-romance by James Cameron's "Avatar" didn't make the cut for SAG nods. Still, the groundbreaking sci-fi film remains a strong Best Picture contender for the Oscars in March.

Nor Bridges of "Crazy Heart," Bullock of "The Blind Side" and supporting-acting honorees Mo'Nique of "Precious" and Christoph Waltz of "Inglourious Basterds," there's reason to expect the Oscar ceremony will be a happy return of Saturday's SAG Awards and last Sunday's Golden Globes.

All four were recognized at the Globes, as well, while "Avatar" was named Best Drama and Cameron won as Best Director.

He will face competition from director Quentin Tarantino, whose "Inglourious Basterds" won the SAG Award for Best Ensemble Performance, which can be a precursor to the top Oscar award.

Last year, SAG's movie cast award was preserved to "Slumdog Millionaire," which went on to win the Best Picture Oscar.

On the TV side

On the TV side of the SAG Awards, the cast of 1960s lifestyle sitcom Season saga "Mad Men" won the trophy for Best Drama Series Ensemble for the second year in a row, while 30 cast members of the TV's "Glee" accepted the award for Best Comedy Series Ensemble.

"Glee" claimed the Best Comedy Series at the Globes.

Alec Baldwin and Tina Fey of NBC's "30 Rock" won for Best Acting in a Comedy Series.

Golden Globe winner Michael C. Hall of Showtime's "Dexter," awaiting a cap location of treatment he's receiving for Hodgkin's lymphoma, won Best Actor in a Drama Series. The award for Best Actress in a Drama went to Julianna Margulies of "The Good Wife."

Kevin Bacon won as Best Actor in a Movie or Miniseries for "Taking Chance," while Drew Barrymore was Best Actress for "Grey Gardens." AP

Jomari Yllana loveless on V-Day

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

I TEASED JOMARI YLLANA, "FILIPINO MC's Swap Ashleigh Dar (winner of Marikina and your ex, Dingo, that's why you will also have a Valentine's Day dinner with Rich Lesthenia and Christopher de Leon?"

He laughed, "Di naman," he said. "I'll just be a guest in Noynoy Love' at the Cuppatea Bar of Mandaluyong on Feb. 12 and 14. Close in ang sure! I can't say no to Kids. My free time using it LOVE NETWORK for, But nothing I said you have to do along Valentine date."

I shot back, "I find that hard to believe, Maybe you just can't make up your mind who to date on 4 days?" He retorted, "I'm back happily single for a year now. I haven't been dating. I'm not looking. He's dying one man any, artist makeup on mga ako (laughs)." Pauses keep, and Perhaps Jomi knows that it's crazy to keep on looking for something he already found many heartbreaks and heartaches ago.

***

John Estrada was the patron of an "alluring aura" when he hosted a lavish basic debut party for his daughter Inah at the Shark Wash Golf & Country Club poolside. The debutante's mom, Janice de Belen, was unsuring in what to wear because she had work. Any mom would feel bad to miss a milestone in her kid's life. But I'm sure Marimenga Janice will make up for it big time.

"I texted Janice," John said. "I was like, do you that she couldn't make it." Or was she just avoiding to see John since she has remodeled issues with him? Whatever it is, the important thing is John is at the birth and still of her little 24/7.

"When they were still kids, I really thought I would be a total dad," John recalled. "And yeah, I realized that I should give them my 100 percent true. I must always be there for them and listen to what they have to say. In my speech I said that if there's something to be worried about me, it's that I have beautiful kids inside and out."

John is our "FAVWife" (good daddy)

***

There's a very close bet between friendship and love. At one point in our lives, we all have been tempted to fall for a friend. That's why many of us will be able to relate to the Kris Cohn and Gerald Santiesteban movie, "Paano Na Kaya," which opens today. Star Cinema's mind under the 2010 and Emerald's gay Valentine's offering is directed by Real Bayani.

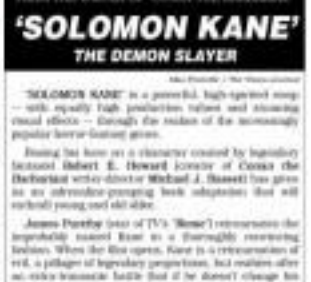
My son JC is more than thrilled to be part of the movie. He tells me that Kris and Gerald are super sweet even off-cam but me is a cheesy way. "Di ako mag-mag-PDA," JC says. "But when you're around them, Abigail Ar sabge. Sapo nag-ehaye ako na kami din si Jon Avila, who plays my BF in the movie. Kung ako Kimerald, kami naman Jon-Jangbo!"

Listening to JC rumble on made me remember when he cried like a baby when he fell for a guy friend who led him on. It made my heart bleed because I was broken about the inner workings of a gay relationship. But just as "Paano Na Kaya" will tell us, one love fits all.

In a previous column, she producer Bim Chio drove to their shoot when her driver was diverted was inadvertently referred to as a pink bike. Both bike and car were Gerald's gifts.)

Catch premier telecaster Jun Pellobra as the Top of the Century Century Bed Stand on Jan. 29 and 30 at 7 p.m. Show starts at 9 p.m.

E-mail sunstaringhelidaung@yahoo.com



"SOLOMON KANE" is a powerful, high-spirited romp — with equally high production values and stunning visual effects — through the realm of the increasingly popular horror-fantasy genre.

Basing his hero on a character created by legendary lecturer Robert E. Howard (creator of Conan the Barbarian) writer-director Michael J. Bassett has given us an adrenaline-pumping book adaptation that will enchant young and old alike.

James Purefoy (star of TV's "Rome") reincarnates the improbably named Kane as a thoroughly entertaining fashion. When the film opens, Kane is a reincarnation of evil, a pillager of legendary proportions, his endless allies as, extra-humanistic battle that if he doesn't change his ways he's going straight to hell. He becomes a predator murderer, and from that point onward, the plot takes on the formulaic, but always effective, trajectory of a man who has fearsome violence but who, pushed to the breaking point, ends up wreaking a vengeance of sickness-satisfying havoc on his adversaries.

Acting as instigating bullies in a corrupt religious militant, about sin and redemption, a belief system that is the product of an era still on the outlook for the Devil and his ever-busy envoys of wickies. Audience members who want something more than gore will be fascinated by the arcane calculistic symbols written on the bodies of Solomon and others and by the many other manifestations that primitive Christianity takes.

Bassett is very good with the cleanest use of powerful visual effects images and at the end of the film, he goes over the top with the introduction of a giant monster that seems like a cross between Godzilla and King Kong ... can Solomon Kane save the world?

Fans would do anything to meet idols—except in HK

CANNES—A GLOBAL SURVEY just unveiled showed one in five people would also "absolutely anything" to meet their idols.

Exactly what fans might be prepared to do was not stated, but the figure rose to one in three people in Britain and the United States. In Hong Kong, music stars need not worry as 90 percent of interviewees were not ready to make any effort to meet their favorite stars or bands.

The survey was presented on the first day ARIAM made this, the world's second biggest music industry fair, opened Sunday. It was based on 8,500 interviews in 13 countries at the end of last year and was compiled by Music Matters and Synovate.

It showed Australia as the country apparently least interested in spending time listening to music, with a mere six percent of those questioned describing themselves as music lovers.

A total 62 percent claimed to be passionate about music. The figure rose to more 80 percent in Spain, Brazil and Britain.

It also indicated that "streaming is the new black," Jasper Donat, president of Sony Europe-based Music Matters, told a packed auditorium of executives and students in the digital, mobile and live music industry.

DID YOU KNOW...

One in five people streamed their favorite tracks or albums from the fast-growing numbers of legal music streaming services such as Myspace or Spotify. That figure rose to 26 percent for people aged under 35, Donat said.

Around 20 percent admitted to downloading a song illegally, with China heading the field, followed by South Korea.

As for advertisements, 45 percent said they were happy to accept advertisements in return for free music. AFP

Memo from TV boss: Pirate that bunk!

IT'S TAKING LIKE WILDFIRE IS SHOW Tyme. Powerful Exec reportedly issued a directive to underlings: Home Monkey Hairbrush Boss.

HE purportedly told the staff to spare no expense, and rap the same, to temple HBO to keep his presence workplace.

The rumor is being regarded as confirmation that PE is obsessed with HBO, romantically.

Oh, no!

More head-hunting

PE's company is said to be eyeing several biggies from other networks as well, including well-loved stars from rival channels, Venerea Comedies and Younger Comic. Also on PE's wish list is Major Mole.

The versatile MP Content Boss was conspicuously present at the star's recent birthday bash.

Loyalty check? Perhaps. Or is connected because SC and MB have business dealings with PE.

Oh pot!

Sounds family-or

Young Director's pals simply can't ignore the coincidence.

"If I so supposedly infatuated with Sean (sic), who was only the latest passion, Sean says, 'I'll tell Isaiah for Handsome (Hunk) who, customarily, has the same family name as I'll.

What's-his-name?

That's incredible!

Big network is pulling out all the stops to build up Penny Starke and Hot Idol as a love team.

Unfortunately, rumors of romance between PS and H simply couldn't fly. It's too incredible, said an industry source.

Talk that HI belongs to the outdoor-outdoor-doesn't-body, of course. Yup, HI is a more demure than PS.

The grapevine says HI is also the latest fancy toy of Guy Clawson. No wonder HI is a regular fixture in GC's projects.

Caught in the act

Making the rounds on the Net is a naked photo of Troubled Hands.

There's nothing sexy about the snapshot, however: it was taken while TH was doing his hairstyle on the mapper.

Fortunately, his photo don't come in Imelda Collins. Reverse

News Mobile head

Cherie Villa, head of news gathering of ABS-CBN's News and Current Affairs division, will be the head of abs-cbnnews.com and NewsMobile starting Feb. 1. "She will be responsible not just for the content, but also for the department's technical and financial operations, as well as staffing," Corporate Communications head Bing Osorio said Monday.

Honoring their own

LOS ANGELES—The Indy Screen Actors Guild nominees presented the youngest recipients a special challenge: Jared Gilmore and Hunter Shipka, who play Don Draper's children on "Mad Men," on their awards on the floor while adult nominees folded questions from reporters' landscape.

HAWAIIAN Caridad on the SAG red carpet. AP

Between 9, and Shipka, 10, seemed the only ones who found the 15-pound, 16-inch trophy dubbed "The Actor," to be heavy. Jeff Bridges commented on its weight a couple of times. AP

Celebrity crush

A crew of online salivating publicists started the emotional celebrity-sniffing on the red carpet outside the Shrine Auditorium on Saturday.

■ "Tina Fey!" one shouted into her headset as cameramen before the "30 Rock" star stepped onto the carpet. Another publicist swinging for Fey, yelling her, "Tina to the pre-show!" Seconds later, Fey was on camera.

■ Mos Def-Jein, Christina Applegate, Vera Farmiga and Tony Bellotte reunited in front of a mural of Picture-perfect platforms in "Inconvenience Tonight." Parents (Hollywood," D., OH) and People magazine.

■ Camcorders followed nominee Anna Kendrick before the drop, poured into the throng. A series of random flashes (also followed) Sophie Lowe and Mehdi Jessup, who both ordered wearing shades.

■ The cast of "Glee" celebrated their victory (Best Comedy Ensemble) at the official SAG Awards-after party inside a plush tent in the Shrine Auditorium parking lot.

Star Jane Lynch cuddled with her girlfriend as the rest of the cast drank champagne, nibbled on lobster pot pie and baked mac and cheese and posed for photos with their trophies.

■ Winners Drew Barrymore and Matthew Broderick ran into each other in the hallway near the trophy table. "Keep doing your thing, baby," Matthew told Drew with a wink. "God bless us." A still trembling Barrymore made her way to claim her trophy. "Thank you so much. Do I get it?" she asked after signing her name.

"Whoa, it's heavy. It's beautiful... It takes two hands. It's holding it like a prize."

■ Michael C. Hall, who has been nominated repeatedly for his work on "Dexter," said, "It's nice to get all the way up on stage," after finally winning a SAG Award. Hall was two Julianna Margulies, who won for her role in "The Good Wife," at the trophy table. They hugged and an kissed, congratulating each other. AP

* * *

Top of the talk shows

For those who missed last weekend's goings-on (If you're one of those who missed, if we are wrong.)

■ Conan Anderson on his "exit" for Nite Owl.

"Think ye hands a Nite... Mughlurking sky." (Sigh.)

■ Ben Chu on Conan's exiting:

"Mungo nawan kami kung ano ang nawan kami ngayon." (Which is...?)

■ Raymund Gutierrez on brother Richard's girlfriends:

"Dame to say me he was at his bar when he was with Georgina (Wilson)."

■ Georgina's reaction:

"I don't think Chard needs a lady to be at his bare. I don't think it should be anywhere his." (Chuckles) (Ang cute, nakakatuwa.)

■ Dennis Trillo's take on her reaction:

"Mayroon nga 20-20, pero wala akong mamumgan, nawawala ang pare ko sa kinalalo at nagwawala ka." (Wha) ang nawan, mahal?)

■ Kim Aquino on her marriage to James Yap:

"Hindi na naman pinanding sabihin na totally okay. Isa I think ang pinakaimportante dun a may commitment kaming dalawa to make it okay. ...Hindi naman kami ayaw umagi sa pag-away. It's just that, I think, kinakapos lang siguro nung mga nawan nung James kung ano ang nangyayari sa mga kinakailan."

(Pa-chalet. Ge daw!.) Bibb Gerry Plana

(Starbalk, The Boss, Showbiz Central)

OPENING TODAY

Ibu

Directed by Ilona Fajardo; stars Kaye Abad, Shinyouki Takashima, Rino Isikawa, Kaya Yoshida, Irma Adlawan, Ping Medina, Charee Pineda, Gina Iniñe

In the thick of World War II, Filipino maiden (Abad) falls in love with a Japanese officer (Takashima) who they save her village from destruction. The fantastical drama tells the story of Vigan, now a Unesco World Heritage Site. Opens today in Robinsons Galleria.

Paano na Kaya?

Directed by Paul S. Soyon; stars Kim Chiu, Gerald Anderson, Kirk Domingo, Thirlene Reles, C. Mendoza, Joanna Padilla

Pilots Mac (Chiu) falls in love with her best friend, Sandboxer Ings (Anderson) who's so, solved with party girl Anna (Reles). When Anna dumps Ings, he runs to Mac, who willingly takes part in the rebound romance. Director Soyon says the unseven chemistry between Chiu and Anderson is "only the tip of the iceberg...they're sweeter closer to real life."

Cirque du Freak's The Vampire's Assistant

Directed by Paul Weitz; stars Chris Massoglia, John C. Reilly, Ken Watanabe, Salma Hayek, Willem Dafoe, Josh Hutcherson

Teenager Darren Shan (Massoglia) joins a traveling circus led by a vampire (Reilly), Frances Heaven's Hands. Dark news. Entertaining and engaging story in the vampire everyauthors." Only Marvel's David Edwards disagrees: "More of a curio than a serious contender for the next Oscars crown." Sunday Times' Edward Porter: "Infinitely more inventive than... Twilight."

Solomon Kaye

Directed by Michael J. Sweet; stars James Pumilla, Allan Reign, Rachel Hard-Wood, Jesse Fleetwing, Rhia-ann Jackson

Shadowhunter-sensitive (Pumilla) must spend eternity vanquishing evil creatures from hell. Sweet's Design (Variety Bash's "insensitive monstrosity," APRA's Movie Emporium's Chris Stanbury calls it a "wild fantasy flick with a great role for Pumilla" Feature's Steve Weinberg: "Well-shot, completely realized and surprisingly entertaining stuck up."

Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs

Directed by Chris Miller, Phil Lord; with the voices of Bill Hader, Anna Faris, James Caan, Mr. T, Bruce Morgan, Adam Sandberg

Luddite inventor (Hader) creates a machine that turns water into food, but it quickly becomes menacing. Movierain.com's Matt Atchity: "Light on its feet and quick-witted." Q Network Film Geek's James Newbold: cranky: "Wonderfully weird." Little White Lies' Anton Bitel sums it up: "It hyperbolic-repeat of unsustainable-consumerism and environmental destruction."

The Blind Side

Directed by John Lee Hancock; stars Sandra Bullock, Tim McGraw, Kathy Bates, Quinton Aaron, Jae'Head, Lily Collins, Jae'Head Haley

Wealthy southern belle (Bullock) adopts homeless African-American teenager (Aaron) who becomes a football star. Philadelphia inquirer's David Hiltbrand says it's "an engaging, but transparent weepfest." Montreal Film Journal's Kevin St. Laforest: "Hardly the most daring, profound or classic... but certainly one of the most rewarding (movies)."